

## Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb

Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb is Madani and has 73 verses and 9 sections.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

### Verses 1 - 3

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَلَا تُطِعِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ  
عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١﴾ وَأَتَّبِعْ مَا يُوْحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا  
تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿٢﴾ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۗ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿٣﴾

O Prophet, fear Allah and do not obey the disbelievers and the hypocrites. Surely Allah is All-Knowing, Wise. [1] And follow what is revealed to you from your Lord. Surely Allah is All-Aware of what you do. [2]

And place your trust in Allah, and Allah is enough as a guardian. [3]

### Commentary

This is a Madani Sūrah. Most of its subjects feature is the loveable persona of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his special place with Allah. There it has been variously emphasized that showing reverence for him is obligatory and that causing any pain to him is *ḥarām* (forbidden). Then the rest of the subjects taken up in the Sūrah also serve as complements to the ultimate perfection of his station.

### The background of revelation

Some narrations have been reported outlining the cause of the revelation of this Sūrah:

1. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ came to live in Madīnah after his

*hijrah*, the environs of the city were inhabited by Jewish tribes, some of whom being Quraizah, Naḍīr and Banū Qainuqā'. Being the prophet of mercy for all, he wished and tried that they somehow embrace Islam. It so happened that a few men from among these Jews started visiting him and posing as Muslims hypocritically. There was no faith in their heart. The Holy Prophet ﷺ took this as sufficient to begin with in the hope that the incidence of some people becoming Muslims would make it easier for him to invite others. Therefore, he used to welcome everyone from among these people particularly and warmly, so much so that even if they happened to do something bad, he would ignore it as a measure of religious expediency. It was because of this event that the initial verses of Sūrah al-Aḥzāb were revealed. (al-Qurtubī)

According to another event reported by Ibn Jarīr from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ, it was after *hijrah* that Walīd Ibn Mughīrah and Shaibah Ibn Rabī'ah from among the *kuffār* of Makkah came to Madīnah. They made an offer before the Holy Prophet ﷺ that they would let him have half of the entire wealth of the Quraish of Makkah, if he were to withdraw his claim of prophethood. And the hypocrites and Jews of Madīnah gave him a threat that they would kill him, if he did not withdraw from his claim and call. Thereupon, these verses were revealed. (Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī)

The third event has been reported by Tha'ālibī and Wāḥidī with no ascription of authority. This event, according to them, goes back to the time when a no war pact was signed between the pagans of Makkah and the Holy Prophet ﷺ at Ḥudaibiyah. It was at that time that Abū Sufyān, 'Ikrimah, Ibn Abī Jahl and Abū al-A'war Sulamī came to Madīnah. There they said to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, 'You stop speaking ill of our objects of worship - or simply say that they will also intercede on our behalf and bring benefits to us. If you do just that much, then we, on our part, will forget about you and your Lord - and the dispute will be all over.'

What they said was very unpleasant for the Holy Prophet ﷺ and for all Muslims who wanted to kill them. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'I have made a peace pact with them, therefore, this cannot be done.' Thereupon, these verses were revealed. (Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī) Though, these reports are different but, in reality, there is no contradiction therein. These events could also be the cause of the revelation of the cited verses.

In these verses, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been asked to do two things: (1) اِتَّقِ اللَّهَ (ittaqillah), that is, 'fear Allah.' (2) لَا تُطِيعِ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ (la tuti'ul-kafirin), that is, 'do not obey the disbelievers.' The order to fear Allah was given for the reason that killing them was a breach of trust which is ḥarām (forbidden). As for the order of not obeying the disbelievers, it was given for the reason that the demands made by the infidels in all these events were unacceptable. Relevant details follow.

### Explanation of Verses

In the opening verse of the Sūrah: يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ (O Prophet, fear Allah - 1), the wording of the address to the Holy Prophet ﷺ is significant. This is a singular honor given and the high regard shown to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Nowhere in the entire Qur'ān, has he ever been addressed directly by his name - as has been the case in addressing other prophets. They have been addressed as يَا آدَمُ (O 'Ādam), يَا نُوحُ (O Nūḥ), يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ (O Ibrāhīm), يَا مُوسَى (O Mūsā) and likewise, repeatedly. Contrary to this, wherever throughout the Qur'ān an address was made to the last among the prophets, may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him, he was addressed by some title, like *nabiyy* (prophet) or *rasūl* (messenger of Allah) etc. The only exception is that of four occasions [3:144; 33:40; 47:2; 48:29] where the very purpose was to declare that he is the *rasūl* of Allah. It is there only that his blessed name has been mentioned - which was functionally necessary.

In this address, two orders were given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ: (1) That of fearing Allah in the sense that the peace pact entered into with the *Mushriks* of Makkah should not be contravened. (2) That of not yielding to what is said by the disbelievers, hypocrites and the Jews. At this point, a question may arise. Is it not that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is, after all, protected from all sins? Now, a breach of solemn pledge is obviously a major sin, and similarly, it is also a great sin to accept the offer of disbelievers and polytheists, quoted under the background of revelation. Since the Holy Prophet ﷺ was already protected from all kinds of sins, what was the need for such an order? According to Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī, these orders have the sense of instruction to abide by this conduct in future as well - as he did in the event concerned. And the order of: اِتَّقِ اللَّهَ (ittaqillah: fear Allah) was made to come earlier for the reason that Muslims wanted to kill the *Mushriks* of Makkah with whom a treaty of peace was already

in effect. Therefore, the instruction to avoid a breach of pledge was made to precede through the expression: *إِتَى اللّٰهَ (ittaqaillah: fear Allah)*. As for the instruction of not yielding to the *kuffār* and *mushrikīn*, since no one had even wanted to do that, it was mentioned later.

And some respected commentators have said that, in this verse, though the address is to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but the purpose is to warn the Muslim community at large. As for him, he was *ma'sūm*, that is, protected in the sense that there was just no probability of the contravention of Divine injunctions from him. But, the law is for the whole community. So, a corresponding mode was employed to make the community hear it and become alerted, and the address was made to the Holy Prophet ﷺ which enhanced the importance of the order significantly by suggesting: When, even the *rasūl* of Allah is the addressee of the order, how can any individual of the Muslim community remain exempted from it?

And Ibn Kathīr has said: In this verse, the real purpose of prohibiting the obedience of the disbelievers is that the Holy Prophet ﷺ should not consult with them or let them have the opportunity of sitting with him frequently, because such consultation or mutual interaction generally becomes the cause of ending up in a disposition favouring the acceptance of what they proposed. Though, there was no probability that the Holy Prophet ﷺ would do what they asked him to do, still, he was stopped from maintaining such liaison with them and from having them participate in his consultations. It is this idea that has been expressed through the word: *إِطَاعَةً (iṭā'ah: obedience, submission or listening to and doing the bidding of someone)*, because such consultations and mutual interaction usually become the cause of ultimate acceptance. So, what has really been done here is that he has been prohibited from adopting the ways that could lead to such *iṭā'ah* or obedience. As for obedience itself, there was no probability that he would ever do that.

Now the second question that may arise here is that according to this verse, the disbelievers and the hypocrites were expected to propose things counter to the true Islamic position. To the extent of open disbelievers, such proposals coming from them were not improbable, and warning against yielding to them is understandable. But, if the hypocrites said anything counter to Islam, they would no longer remain hypocrites,

because in that case they would become open disbelievers. What, then, was the need to mention them separately? The answer is that it is possible that although the hypocrites may not have said anything against Islam very openly, but that they may have said something in support of other disbelievers.

And if the event featuring the hypocrites, described under the background of revelation, is taken to be the cause of revelation, it simply leaves no difficulty or vagueness behind - because, in terms of this event, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has simply been prohibited from dealing with Jews calling themselves Muslims in a spirit of extra civility and accommodation.

Later, towards the end of this verse, by saying: **إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا** (Surely, Allah is All- Knowing, Wise - 1), stated there is the wisdom of the order given immediately earlier - that is, 'fear Allah and do not obey the disbelievers and hypocrites.' The reason is that Allah Ta'ālā, who knows the consequences of everything, is most wise, and fully aware of what is better for His servants. This was said to counter some of the things put forth by the disbelievers or hypocrites which could generate for them certain advantages of lesser tension and increased mutual tolerance. But, from this Allah Ta'ālā prohibited him by declaring that even this tolerance of such people was counter to what was expedient under the circumstances and that such a policy was not going to end well.

What is said in verse 2: **وَاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ ط إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا** (And follow what is revealed to you from your Lord. Surely Allah is All-Aware of what you do.) is actually a complement of the first order. It means: Do not be beguiled or taken in by what the disbelievers and hypocrites say and do not agree or yield to it. Instead of all that, whatever you have been told by Allah through *wahy* (revelation) remains the only thing you and your companions should follow. Since, the noble companions ﷺ and Muslims at large are included under this address, therefore, by saying: **بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ** (what you do) in the plural form at the end, everyone was alerted.

Once again, the last statement: **وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا** (And place your trust in Allah and Allah is enough as a guardian- 3) is also a complement of the same order. Here it is being said: As for your approach, just pay no heed to what they say and, in order to succeed in your

objective, you should trust no one but Allah for He, in Himself and by Himself, is the ultimate doer, maker and fixer of all matters and things. With Him there, you do not need to acquiesce in the opinion of anyone.

### Ruling

The cited verse proves that, in religious matters, even consulting with disbelievers is not permissible. In other matters relating to technical or functional experience, there is no harm in doing so. And Allah knows best.

### Verses 4 - 5

مَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِرَجُلٍ مِّنْ قَلْبَيْنِ فِيْ جَوْفِهِۦٓ وَمَا جَعَلَ أَزْوَاجَكُمْ الَّتِي تَطْهَرُونَ مِنْهُنَّ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ أَدْعِيَاءَكُمْ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ ذٰلِكُمْ قَوْلُكُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَقُولُ الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ يَهْدِي السَّبِيلَ ﴿٤﴾  
 أَدْعُوهُمْ لِأَبَائِهِمْ هُوَ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ لَّمْ تَعْلَمُوا آبَاءَهُمْ فِإِخْوَانُكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَمَوَالِيكُمْ وَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا أَخْطَأْتُمْ بِهِ وَلَا لَكِن مَّا تَعَمَّدَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿٥﴾

Allah has not made for any man two hearts in his (chest) cavity, nor did he make your wives whom you subjected to *zihar*, your mothers, nor did he make your adopted sons your (real) sons. That is (merely) a word uttered by your mouths. And Allah says the truth and He shows the (right) way. [4] Call them by (the name of) their (real) fathers; It is more equitable in the sight of Allah. And if you do not know their fathers, then they are your brothers in faith and your friends. And there is no sin on you in the mistake you make, but in that which you do with intention of your heart and Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [5]

### Commentary

Previous verses carried instructions to the Holy Prophet ﷺ asking him not to act upon their advice and not to be cajoled into what they wanted to achieve. In the cited verses, there is a refutation of three customs prevailing among disbelievers as well as of their false notions.

(1) During *Jāhiliyyah*, Arabs used to say about a person who was smarter than others that he had two hearts in his chest cage.

(2) Then they had a custom about their wives following which a person would declare his wife to be like the back of his mother, or some other part of the body, and go on to say, 'you are, for me, like the back of my mother.' This, in their usage, was called "*Zihār*." It is a derivation from: *Zahr*, which means 'back'. They thought that if a person who had done "*Zihār*" with his wife, she becomes *ḥarām* (unlawful) to him for ever.

(3) And then they had another custom under which one person would make the son of another his so-called or adopted son and who so would take a son in that manner, the boy would become known as 'his' son and would be addressed as such. According to their practice, this so-called or adopted son used to be recognized in all rules and regulations as a 'real' son. For instance, he would be regarded as a sharer even in inheritance, like a real offspring along with the children from his loins. Then, they would also regard the marriage relations of the so-called or adopted son as falling under the standard rule whereby the marriage with a category of certain women is unlawful. For example, as marriage with the wife of one's real son remains unlawful even after he has divorced her, they also took the divorced wife of the so-called or adopted son to be unlawful for that person.

Since the first of the three notions of the period of *Jāhiliyyah* were not tied up with religious belief or conduct, therefore, the Shari'ah of Islām had no need to refute it. To determine whether there is just the one heart inside the chest or, may be, there are two as well was simply a case of anatomical inquiry. That it was obviously false was known to everyone. Therefore, most likely, the matter of its refutation was also introduced as a prologue to the other two issues and it was said: The way false is the saying of the people of *Jāhiliyyah* - that 'someone could have two hearts in his chest', the falsity of which is known to everyone - similarly, false are their notions in the matters of *Zihār* (falsely declaring one's wife unlawful to him like his mother) and adoption of sons.

As for the injunctions governing the two issues of *Zihār* and adopted son, these are among the social and familial issues that have a great importance in Islām - to the extent that even their subsidiary details have

been given in the Qur'an by Allah Ta'ālā Himself. unlike other matters, this has not been left at the declaration of principles only with its detailed enunciation entrusted with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Regarding both these issues, the people of Jāhiliyyah, following their baseless whims, had a bunch of self-made laws relating to the lawful and the unlawful, the permissible and the impermissible. It was the duty of the True Religion that it should refute these false notions and make the truth manifest. Therefore, it was said: وَمَا جَعَلَ أَزْوَاجَكُمْ الَّتِي تَنْظُرُونَ مِنْهُنَّ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ It means: 'You are wrong in thinking that, should someone call his wife the equal or like of his mother, the wife does not go on to become unlawful for him for ever like his real mother. Just because you say so, a wife does not become a mother, in reality. Your mother is but she who gave birth to you.' Now, at least, the notion of the people of Jāhiliyyah that *Zihār* makes one's wife unlawful for ever is refuted by this verse. What happens next? Does saying so bring about any legal effect? The standing injunction in this connection appears in Sūrah al-Mujādalah [58:2-4] where saying so has been called a sin and abstention from it obligatory. And it is provided there that he who has made such a declaration should offer a *kaffārah* (expiation) of having done *zihār* after which having intercourse with his wife becomes lawful for him. The details of this issue will appear in the Commentary on Sūrah al-Mujādalah (Mā'ariful-Qur'an, Volume VIII).

The second issue was that of the *mutabanna*, i.e adopted son. About that, it was said: وَمَا جَعَلَ أَدْعِيَاءَكُمْ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ (nor did he make your adopted sons your (real) sons - 4). The word: أَدْعِيَاءٌ (*ad'iyyā'*) is the plural of: دَعِيٌَّ (*da'iyy*) which means a so-called son. The sense is that the way no man has two hearts inside him and the way by likening one's wife to one's mother, the wife does not become the mother - similarly, the so-called son does not become your real son. In other words, neither will he be entitled to a share in inheritance with other sons, nor the precepts of the unlawfulness of marriage will apply to him. For example, the way the divorced wife of a real son is unlawful for his father for ever, the divorced wife of an adopted son is not unlawful for his so-called father. Since this last matter affects many other matters, therefore, it was complimented by another injunction, that is, even an adopted son should be attributed to his real father, and not to the person who has adopted him - because, this spells out the danger of misgiving and confusion creeping in many matters.

There is a *hadīth* from Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه appearing in al-Bukhārī, Muslim and others in which it has been said: 'Before the revelation of this verse, we used to call Zayd Ibn Ḥārithah by the name of Zayd Ibn Muḥammad (because the Holy Prophet ﷺ had taken him in as his *mutabannā*, adopted son). After the revelation of this verse, we abandoned this practice.'

### Ruling

This tells us about many people who call the children of others as 'son' which, if because of simple affection, not because of declaring him an adopted son or a *mutabannā*, then, this would though be permissible, still, it is not the better choice, because it looks like violating the prohibition, at least in appearance. (As in Rūḥ al-Ma‘ānī from al-Khāfajī Alā al-Baiḍāwī)

And this is the same matter which, by throwing the Quraish of Arabia into deception, led them to commit a sin of terribly serious proportions to the extent that they started blaming the Holy Prophet ﷺ by saying that he had married the divorced wife of his 'son', while in fact, he was not his son, but only a *mutabannā* (adopted son) - something that will be mentioned in this very Sūrah a little later.

### Verse 6

النَّبِيُّ أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ وَأُولُو  
الْأَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَىٰ بِبَعْضٍ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ  
وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَفْعَلُوا إِلَىٰ أَوْلِيَائِكُمْ مَعْرُوفًا كَانَ ذَلِكَ فِي  
الْكِتَابِ مَسْطُورًا ﴿٦﴾

The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves and his wives are their mothers. And those having mutual kinship are closer to one another (for the purpose of inheritance) than (other) believers and emigrants according to the Book of Allah, unless you do some good to your friends (by making a will in their favour). This had been written in the Book (the Preserved Tablet). [6]

### Commentary

As stated earlier, most of the subjects in Sūrah al-Aḥzāb relate to the reverence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and to the unlawfulness of causing pain to him. After the mention of pains caused to him by disbelievers and hypocrites at the beginning of the Sūrah, some instructions were given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ following which three customs of the Jāhiliyyah were refuted. Out of these, the last custom related to such a pain inflicted on the Holy Prophet ﷺ because the disbelievers had - at the time of the marriage of Sayyidah Zainab رضى الله عنها, the divorced wife of Sayyidnā Zayd رضي الله عنه, and on the basis of their pagan custom of *mutabanna* - blamed the Holy Prophet ﷺ of having married the divorced wife of his 'son.' Thus, from the beginning of the Sūrah up to this point, the subject concerned the pain caused to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In the present verse (6), it has been stated that the reverence of and the obedience to the Holy Prophet ﷺ more than the whole creation is *wājib* (necessary in the degree of obligation)

The meaning of the expression: "The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves" mentioned by Maulānā Thanavī is based on the saying of Ibn 'Aṭīyyah and others which has been opted for by al-Qurṭubī and most commentators. According to it, every Muslim is duty-bound to obey and implement the command of the Holy Prophet ﷺ more than the command of his parents. If one's parents oppose any command of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, their obedience in that matter is not permissible. Similarly, the implementation of his command takes precedence even over the pulls of one's own desiring self.

In a *hadīth* of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه appearing in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī and others, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have said:

مَا مِنْ مُؤْمِنٍ إِلَّا وَأَنَا أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِهِ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ إِقْرَأُوا إِنَّ شِعْتُمْ النَّبِيَّ أَوْلَى  
بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ

There is no such believer for whom I am not the closest of all people in this world and in the world to come. Read if you wish (this verse of the Qur'ān to confirm): ... (The Prophet is ...).

The sense of the statement is that his affection for every Muslim exceeds the affection of the whole world and, as such, the necessary

outcome has to be no other but that every believer holds him dearer than anyone else - which is something also said in another *hadīth*:

لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّىٰ أَكُونَ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ وَالِدِهِ وَوَلَدِهِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ

None of you can become a believer until I become the dearest one to him, dearer than his father, and his son, and the whole world full of people/and the rest of the human beings, all of them. (Al-Bukhārī and Muslim - Maḥzarī)

Said in the following sentence of the verse was: وَأَزْوَاجُهُ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ (and his wives are your mothers). Here, the reference to the blessed wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as mothers of the Muslim community means being mothers in terms of their respect and honor. Injunctions relating to the mother and her children, and those of the forbiddance of marriage, and of the absence of *ḥijāb* due to having the status of a *maḥram*, and of holding a share in the inheritance are injunctions which have nothing to do with it - as made explicit towards the end of the verse. As for the forbiddance of the marriage of the blessed wives with anyone in the Muslim community, this has been declared in a separate verse. Therefore, it is not necessary that even this forbiddance of marriage may be for the reason of being mothers.

### Ruling

The cited verse proves that the least breach of etiquette in the case of anyone of the blessed wives رضى الله عنهن is forbidden for two reasons: (1) That they are the mothers of the Muslim community and (2) also because any pain caused to them would cause pain to the Holy Prophet ﷺ - which is forbidden in a far too extreme a degree.

The literal sense of the expression: أولوا الأرحام (*ulu 'l-arḥām*) in the next sentence of the verse: وَأُولُوا الْأَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَىٰ بِبَعْضٍ (And those having mutual kinship are closer to one another (for the purpose of inheritance) than (other) believers and emigrants) covers all relatives, whether they are those whom Muslim jurists call by the name of: عَصَبَات (*aṣbāt*: agnates) or those who are juxtaposed as أولوا الأرحام "*ulu 'l-arḥām*" against عَصَبَات "*aṣbāt*" in the light of a particular terminology. This terminology used by Muslim jurists, a later day product, is not what is meant here in the Holy Qur'an.

Thus, it means that the relationship of the revered *rasūl* and his

blessed wives with the believers of the community is, though of a degree which precedes even that of a mother and father but, on the injunctions relating to the distribution of inheritance, this has simply no bearing. This inheritance, in fact, will be distributed only on the basis of lineal and closer relationships.

In the early stage of Islam, entitlement to shares in the inheritance was based on spiritual relationship. Later on, it was abrogated in favour of closeness of relationships which has been announced by the noble Qur'ān itself. This entire detail of the abrogating and the abrogated verses has appeared in Sūrah al-Anfāl (Mā'ariful-Qur'ān, Volume IV). And in that context, the mention of: وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ (and the emigrants) after: مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (and the believers) is there to highlight their distinction.

And some early commentators have said that, at this place, the Believers ('*al-mu'minīn*') mean the Anṣār and the Emigrants (*Muhājirīn*) mean the Quraish. When placed in contrast with the *Muhājirīn*, it becomes clear that the word: '*al-mu'minīn*' (the believers) is for the Anṣār. In that case, this verse will be an abrogator of the rule of inheritance on the basis of the *Hijrah* (توارث بالهجرة) because, during the early stage of *Hijrah*, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had, by establishing brotherly relations between the *Muhājirīn* and the *Ansar*, ordered that they will also inherit from each other. This verse abrogated that rule of 'inheritance by virtue of Hijrah' (Qurtubī)

Soon thereafter, it was stated: إِلَّا أَنْ تَفْعَلُوا إِلَىٰ أَوْلِيَآءِكُمْ مَعْرُوفًا (unless you do some good to your friends (by making a will in their favour - 6). In other words, this means that inheritance as such will be received only on the basis of relationship - anyone unrelated will not be an inheritor - but, there may be people with whom you relate as your brothers in faith. If you wish to give them something, you have the right to do so. You could do so within your lifetime and give it to them as a gift, and it is also possible to make a will in their favour so that they get it after your death.

### Verses 7 - 8

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّنَ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَمِنْكَ وَمِنْ نُوحٍ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ  
وَعِيسَىٰ ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ ۖ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُم مِّيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا ﴿٧﴾ لَيْسَ سَأَلَ

الصّٰدِقِيْنَ عَن صِدْقِهِمْ ۚ وَاَعَدَّ لِلْكَٰفِرِيْنَ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ﴿٨﴾

And (recall) when We took from the prophets their covenant, and from you and from Nuḥ and Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and 'Isā, the son of Maryam. And We did take from them a firm covenant, [7] so that He (Allah) may ask the truthful about their truth. And He has prepared a painful punishment for the disbelievers. [8]

### Commentary

At the beginning of the Sūrah, by saying: *وَاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ*, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was asked to follow the Divine revelation sent to him. Then, in the previous verse: *الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ*, the believers have been obligated with the implementation of the orders of the recipient of the revelation. It is to further confirm and emphasize these very two things that, in the present two verses as well, the same two subjects have been reiterated, that is, the recipient of the revelation has been obligated to follow the revelation received by him from Allah and the non-recipient of the revelation has been obligated to follow the recipient of the revelation.

### The Covenant of the Prophets

The covenant taken from the blessed prophets, according to the cited verse, is in addition to the universal pledge taken from the entire creation as it appears in a saying of the Holy Prophet ﷺ reported by Imām Aḥmad:

خُصُّوا بِمِيثَاقِ الرِّسَالَةِ وَالنُّبُوَّةِ وَهُوَ قَوْلُهُ، تَعَالَىٰ وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِيثَاقَهُمْ

"It was the prophets only from whom the covenant of messenger-ship and prophethood was taken, and this is the meaning of what Allah Ta'ālā has said:....(And when We took from the prophets their covenant...to the end of the verse).

This pledge from the prophets was the pledge of discharging the duties of prophethood and messenger-ship and of attesting to the veracity of each other and of being mutually helpful - as Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and others have reported from Sayyidnā Qatādah رضي الله عنه. And according to one narration, it was also included in this pledge of the prophets that they should also proclaim that "Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafā رضي الله عنه is the messenger of Allah, and the last of the prophets. After him, there will be no prophet [ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدَهُ ]

And this pledge from prophets was also taken in eternity (*Azal*) at the same time when the pledge of: *أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ* (*alastu bi-rabbikum*: Am I not your Lord?) was taken from the created at large. (*Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī* and *Mazḥarī*)

After having generally mentioned prophets, peace be on them all, before saying: *وَمِنْكَ وَمَنْ نُوحٍ* (and from you and from Nūḥ... up to the end of the verse), five of them were particularly named on the basis of the unique distinction they have among the group of prophets. Then, even within those, it was by using the word: *مِنْكَ* (*minka*: from you) that the mention of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was made to precede that of others - although, his appearance in this world is later than all of them. The reason for this has been given in Ḥadīth itself:

كُنْتُ أَوَّلَ النَّاسِ فِي الْخَلْقِ وَآخِرَهُمْ فِي الْبَعْثِ (رواه ابن سعد وابو نعيم فى الحلية عن  
ميسرة الفجر والطبرانى فى الكبير عن ابن عباس - مظهرى)

'I am the first human being in the creation and the last of them in being sent (with the prophetic mission).' (Reported by Ibn Sa'd and Abū Nu'aim in *Al-Ḥilyah* from *Maisirah al-Mafjar* and *At-Tabarānī* in *al-Kabīr* from Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ - *Mazḥarī*)

### Verses 9 - 27

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَاءَتْكُمْ جُنُودٌ  
فَارْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا وَجُنُودًا لَّمْ تَرَوْهَا ط وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ  
بَصِيرًا ﴿٩﴾ إِذْ جَاءَ وَكُمْ مِنْ فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ وَإِذْ زَاغَتِ  
الْأَبْصَارُ وَبَلَغَتِ الْقُلُوبُ الْحَنَاجِرَ وَتَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ الظُّنُونَا ﴿١٠﴾  
هُنَالِكَ ابْتُلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَزُلْزِلُوا زِلْزَالًا شَدِيدًا ﴿١١﴾ وَإِذْ يَقُولُ  
الْمُنْفِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ مَا وَعَدَنَا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ، إِلَّا  
غُرُورًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَإِذْ قَالَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْهُمْ يَا أَهْلَ يَثْرِبَ لَا مُقَامَ لَكُمْ  
فَارْجِعُوا ۖ وَيَسْتَأْذِنُ فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ النَّبِيَّ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّ بُيُوتَنَا عَوْرَةٌ ۖ وَمَا  
هِيَ بِعَوْرَةٍ ۖ إِنَّ يُرِيدُونَ إِلَّا فِرَارًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَلَوْ دَخَلَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ

أَقْطَارِهَا ثُمَّ سَأَلُوا الْفِتْنَةَ لَاتُوهَا وَمَا تَلَبَّثُوا بِهَا إِلَّا يَسِيرًا ﴿١٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ  
 كَانُوا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ قَبْلُ لَا يُؤَلُّونَ الْأَدْبَارَ وَكَانَ عَهْدُ اللَّهِ  
 مَسْئُولًا ﴿١٥﴾ قُلْ لَنْ يَنْفَعَكُمْ الْفِرَارُ إِنْ فَرَرْتُمْ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ أَوِ الْقَتْلِ  
 وَإِذَا لَا تُمْتَعُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿١٦﴾ قُلْ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَعْصِمُكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ  
 إِنْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ سُوءًا أَوْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ رَحْمَةً ۗ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ  
 اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿١٧﴾ قَدْ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ الْمُعَوِّقِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَالْقَائِلِينَ  
 لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ هَلُمَّ إِلَيْنَا ۚ وَلَا يَأْتُونَ الْبَأْسَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿١٨﴾ أَشِحَّةً  
 عَلَيْكُمْ ۖ فَإِذَا جَاءَ الْخَوْفُ رَأَيْتَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَيْكَ تَدُورُ أَعْيُنُهُمْ  
 كَالَّذِي يُغْشَى عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ ۚ فَإِذَا ذَهَبَ الْخَوْفُ سَلَقُوكُمْ  
 بِالْسِنَةِ ۖ جِدَادٍ أَشِحَّةً عَلَى الْخَيْرِ ۗ أُولَئِكَ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا فَأَحْبَطَ اللَّهُ  
 أَعْمَالَهُمْ ۗ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا ﴿١٩﴾ يَحْسَبُونَ الْأَحْزَابَ  
 لَمْ يَذْهَبُوا ۚ وَإِنْ يَأْتِ الْأَحْزَابَ يَوَدُّوا لَوَانَهُمْ بَادُونَ فِي الْأَعْرَابِ  
 يَسْئَلُونَ عَنْ أَنْبَاءِكُمْ ۖ وَلَوْ كَانُوا فِيكُمْ مَا قُتِلُوا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٢٠﴾ لَقَدْ  
 كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسُوةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ  
 الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٢١﴾ وَلَمَّا رَأَى الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْأَحْزَابَ لَاقَالُوا  
 هَذَا مَا وَعَدَنَا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ، وَصَدَقَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ، وَمَا زَادَهُمْ إِلَّا  
 إِيمَانًا وَتَسْلِيمًا ﴿٢٢﴾ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رِجَالٌ صَدَقُوا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ  
 عَلَيْهِ ۖ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ قَضَىٰ نَحْبَهُ، وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَنْتَظِرُ ۖ وَمَا بَدَّلُوا تَبْدِيلًا  
 ﴿٢٣﴾ لِيَجْزِيَ اللَّهُ الصَّادِقِينَ بِصِدْقِهِمْ وَيُعَذِّبَ الْمُنْفِقِينَ إِنْ شَاءَ  
 أَوْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٢٤﴾ وَرَدَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ  
 كَفَرُوا بِغَيْظِهِمْ لَمْ يَنَالُوا خَيْرًا ۖ وَكَفَى اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الْقِتَالَ ۗ

وَكَانَ اللَّهُ قَوِيًّا عَزِيزًا ﴿٢٥﴾ وَأَنْزَلَ الَّذِينَ ظَاهَرُوهُمْ مِنْ أَهْلِ  
الْكِتَابِ مِنْ صَيَاصِيهِمْ وَقَذَفَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ فَرِيقًا تَقْتُلُونَ  
وَتَأْسِرُونَ فَرِيقًا ﴿٢٦﴾ وَأَوْرَثَكُمْ أَرْضَهُمْ وَدِيَارَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ وَأَرْضًا  
لَمْ تَطْعُوهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرًا ﴿٢٧﴾

O those who believe,<sup>(1)</sup> remember Allah's favour to you, when the forces (of the infidels) came upon you, and We sent upon them a wind, and the forces (of angels) you did not see. And Allah is watchful of what you do. [9]

(Recall) when they came upon you from above you and from below you, and when the eyes were distracted and the hearts reached the throats, and you were thinking about Allah all sorts of thoughts. [10] At that occasion, the believers were put to a trial and were shaken with a violent convulsion. [11] And (remember) when the hypocrites and those having malady in their hearts were saying, "Allah and His messenger did not promise us but deceitfully; [12] and when a group of them said, "O people of Yathrib (Madīnah), there is no place for you to stay; so go back." And a group of them was seeking permission (to leave) from the prophet, saying, "In fact our homes are vulnerable," while they were not vulnerable; they wanted nothing but to escape. [13] And if it (Madīnah) is entered (by the enemy, in their presence,) from all its sides and they are asked (to join) the mischief, they would readily commit it, and would not remain in them (their homes) but for a short while<sup>(2)</sup> [14] despite that they had already made a covenant with Allah that they would not turn their backs; and a covenant with Allah has to be answered for. [15]<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) These verses refer to the battle of Aḥzāb, also known as 'the battle of Khandaq' in which different tribes of Arabia, led by the Quraish invaded upon Madīnah, and the Holy Prophet ﷺ defended the city by digging a trench.

(2). It means that although they are escaping from the battle - field on the pretext that their homes are not safe, yet if the forces of the enemy invite them to join the battle against Muslims, after their having entered the city from all sides, they would easily join them in their mischief against Muslims, and would no more remain in their homes. It shows that their pretext is sham.

(3). That is, everyone who enters into a covenant with Allah, has to answer how he has fulfilled it.

Say, "Flight will never be of any use to you, if you flee from death or killing, and even then you will not be let to enjoy (life) but for a little while." [16] Say, "Who is there to protect you from Allah, if He intends evil to you, or (who is there to prevent Him) if He intends mercy for you?" And beside Allah, they will not find for themselves either a friend or a helper. [17]

Allah does know the ones from among you who prevent (others from joining the battle) and those who say to their brothers, "Come along with us," and who do not come to the battle but for a little while, [18] (and that too) with a greed against you (i.e. to extract a share of spoils from you). But when fear comes, you will see them looking towards you, rolling their eyes, like the one who gets faint because of death. Then once fear is gone, they assail you with sharp tongues, in greed for the good (i.e. the wealth acquired as spoils).<sup>(4)</sup> These people did not accept faith (in real terms), therefore Allah has nullified their acts.<sup>(5)</sup> And all this is so easy for Allah. [19] They think that the coalition forces have not(yet) gone. And should the coalition forces come (again), they would like to be living in countryside among the Bedouins, asking (others) about your news. And even if they were to remain among you, they would not fight, but a little. [20]

There is indeed a good model for you in the Messenger of Allah - for the one who has hope in Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah profusely. [21]<sup>(6)</sup>

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- (4). This verse has unveiled cowardice of the hypocrites on the one hand, and their greed for wealth on the other. The sense is that they are so coward that when an attack from the enemy is apprehended, they are frightened like a person who becomes faint in fear of death. But when the enemy is driven away by the Muslims, and the spoils of war are distributed, they come forward assailing the Muslims with their sharp tongues and claiming that the victory is achieved with their help, and therefore they deserve a share in the spoils.
- (5). It means that virtuous acts deserve reward in the Hereafter only when they are accompanied by true faith in Allah, and since it has become evident that these hypocrites do not have true faith, even their virtuous acts will not be of any use to them in the Hereafter and will remain null and void.
- (6). In the context of the battle of Aḥzab, this verse is initially meant to remind the hypocrites that they should have followed the example of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who stood firm in the battle, but according to the unique style of the Holy Qur'ān, the direction is given in generic terms to lay down a universal rule that the Muslims should follow the examples set by the Holy Prophet ﷺ in all matters of life.

And when the believers saw the coalition forces, they said, "This is what Allah and His messenger had promised us, and Allah and His messenger had told the truth." And it only increased them in faith and submission. [22]

Among the believers, there are men who came true to the covenant they had with Allah. So, some of them have fulfilled their vows (by sacrificing their lives in the way of Allah), and some of them are (still) waiting, and they did not change (their commitment) in the least. [23] <sup>(7)</sup> (All this happened) so that Allah may give reward to the truthful for their truthfulness, and punish the hypocrites, if He so wills, or accept their repentance. Surely, Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [24]

And Allah has turned back the disbelievers with all their rage, having achieved no good. And Allah sufficed the believers against fighting. <sup>(8)</sup> And Allah is Powerful, Mighty. [25] And He has brought those of the people of the Book who had backed them, down from their fortresses, and cast awe into their hearts, so as to make you kill some of them and take others as captives. [26] And He let you inherit their land and their homes and their wealth, and a land you have not trodden (so far). And Allah is Powerful to do any thing. [27] <sup>(9)</sup>

- (7). This verse admires those companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who had not participated in the battle of Badr due to some valid excuses, and had vowed that whenever the next battle would come to happen, they would offer their lives in defence of faith. Then, some of them, like Sayyidnā 'Anas Ibn Naḍr ؓ and Muṣ'ab Ibn 'Umair ؓ fulfilled their vows by sacrificing their lives in the battle of 'Uḥūd, while some others, like Sayyidnā 'Uthmān and Ṭalḥah ؓ remained alive, but eagerly waiting for having the honor of being martyred in the way of Allah.
- (8). It means that Allah made a divine arrangement by sending a violent wind to the coalition forces which compelled them to go back, and thus the Muslims did not have to indulge in a regular battle, except to the extent of some individual encounters.
- (9). These two verses refer to Banū qurayzah, the Jewish tribe who had entered into a treaty with the Muslims not to fight against them, and not to support the enemies of the Muslims. But at the time of The battle of Aḥzāb, they violated the terms of the treaty and supported the coalition forces. Even earlier, they had been constantly conspiring against the Muslims to an intolerable extent. After the battle of Aḥzāb was over, the Holy Prophet ﷺ besieged the fortress of Banū qurayzah, and finally, they had to surrender, and most of their men were killed, and the women and children were made captives. This event has been referred to in these verses. At the same time, Allah Ta'ālā has given a good news to the Muslims that they would conquer some other lands which they had not entered before. The words, "and a land you have not trodden" refer to such future victories, especially to the conquest of Khyber that followed within a few years after the battle of Aḥzāb.

### Commentary

Identified in the previous verses was the great station of the Holy Prophet ﷺ along with the instruction to Muslims that they should follow and obey him totally and perfectly. Congruent to this, these two full sections of the Qur'ān have been revealed about the event of the battle of al-Aḥzāb. Mentioned therein is the simultaneous attack of the combined forces of many groups of disbelievers and polytheists, their threatening encirclement, the subsequent blessings bestowed on Muslims by Allah Ta'ālā and the several miracles that issued forth at the hands of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Then, very much as a corollary to this, there are many instructions and injunctions relating to different departments of life. It is because of these very priceless instructions that great commentators have written about the details of the event of Aḥzāb with considered details at this place, particularly al-Qurṭubī, Maḥzarī and others. Therefore, some details of the event of Aḥzāb along with the instructions are being written here. Most of it has been taken from al-Qurṭubī and Maḥzarī. That which has been taken from some other book carries the necessary reference.

### THE EVENT OF THE BATTLE OF AL-AḤZAB

The word: الأَحْزَابُ (*al-aḥzab*) is the plural form of: حِزْبٌ (*ḥizb*) which means party or group. In this battle, the combined forces of different groups of disbelievers had, under a pact to eliminate Muslims, mounted an attack on Madīnah. Therefore, this battle has been named as the battle of al-Aḥzāb. And since, in this battle, a trench was also dug under the orders of the Holy Prophet ﷺ across the line of enemy attack, therefore, this battle is also called the battle of the Trench (Khandaq). The battle of Banū Quraizah too - which took place immediately after the battle of al-Aḥzāb and finds mention in the cited verses as well - that too, was actually a part of the battle of al-Aḥzāb, as it would appear through the details of this event.

In the year only next to the year the Holy Prophet ﷺ graced Madīnah after migrating from Makkah al-Mukarramah, the event of the battle of Badr came to pass. In the third year, came the battle of Uḥud. In the fourth year, it was this battle of al-Aḥzāb. Some narrations say that this event came to pass in the fifth year. Nevertheless, the attacks of the

disbelievers against Muslims had been continuing since the *hijrah* up to this time without any break. The attack on the occasion of the battle of al-Aḥzāb was made with full power, determination and mutual pledge. Therefore, this battle was the severest on the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the noble Ṣaḥābah as compared with other battles - because, the count of the attacking confederate forces of the disbelievers has been given as twelve to fifteen thousand. On the other side, there were Muslims, three thousand in all, and those too very ill-equipped. Then, the time was hard winter. The Qur'an describes the horrible severity of this event by saying things like: *زَاغَتِ الْأَبْصَارُ* (the eyes were distracted - 33:10), *بَلَغَتِ الْقُلُوبُ الْحَنَاجِرَ* (and hearts reached the throats - 33:10) and *وَزُلْزِلُوا زِلْزَالًا شَدِيدًا* (they were shaken with a violent convulsion - 33:11).

But, the way this time was the hardest on Muslims, they were also compensated at its best by Allah Ta'ālā. It was with His help and support that the matter ended in favour of Muslims in the form of such a great success and victory that broke the back of all hostile groups of Mushriks, Jews and Hypocrites leaving them just about incapable of even thinking of some attack against Muslims in the future. From that angle, this battle was the last armed confrontation between *kufr* and Islam - fought on the plains of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah in the fourth or fifth year of *hijrah*.

The event began when about twenty men from the Jewish tribe of Banū Naḍīr and the tribe of Abū Wā'il who were morbidly hostile to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and Muslims at large reached Makkah al-Mukarramah. They met with Quraish chiefs and roused them to start a war against Muslims. The Quraish chiefs were under the impression that the way Muslims took their idol-worship to be *kufr* (disbelief, infidelity) and for which reason they regarded their religion as ill-founded, the Jews too would be no different and their thinking would be similar to it. If so, how could they hope for a common ground of unity from them? Therefore, these chiefs asked the Jews, "You people know that there is difference of religion and creed between us and Muḥammad ﷺ. And you are the people of the Book and the people of learning. First of all, you tell us as to which religion is better in your sight, ours or theirs?"

### **A lie is no novelty in the arena of politics!**

The reply given by these Jews was totally contrary to their knowledge

and conscience. To them, they said, "Your religion is better than the religion of Muḥammad." Thereupon, the infidels of Makkah were somewhat satisfied. Still, the matter was taken to a future demonstration of intent. It was decided that these twenty visitors joined by fifty men from among the Quraish chiefs would go to al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, cling to the walls of the Baytullah by their chests and make a solemn pledge before Allah that they would continue fighting against Muḥammad ﷺ to their last man.

### **A marvel of the forbearance and magnanimity of Allah Ta'ālā!**

Here are the enemies of Allah in the House of Allah clinging to the walls of the Ka'abah of Allah making a compact to fight a war against His Rasūl - and then return satisfied with a new passion for war! This is unique manifestation of the forbearance and magnanimity of Allāh Ta'ālā. Then, the ultimate end of this compact is not too far to find. It will appear towards the end of the narrative in that all of them bolted from this battle.

These Jews, after having made a pact with the Quraish of Makkah, reached the tribe of Ghiṭfān, a great warring tribe of Arabia. They told them that they and the Quraish of Makkah were in full agreement with the plan to eliminate the spreaders of this new religion (Islam) once for all with their combined power. They asked them too to join hands with them in that pact. Then, they also offered them a bribe. They promised to give them the total produce of dates in one year in Khaibar - according to some narrations, they promised the half of it to the tribe of Ghiṭfān. 'Uyaiyah Ibn Ḥiṣn, the chief of the tribe of Ghiṭfān, approved of his participation in the pact under this condition. Thus, they too became a part of the war effort.

Then, in accordance with the mutual pact, the Quraish armed force of four thousand men, three hundred horses and war supplies laden on one thousand camels came out of Makkah under the command of Abū Sufyān and stopped at Marr az-Zahrān. Here, all tribes of Aslam, Ashja', Banū Murrah, Banū Kinānah, Fazārah and Ghiṭfān joined them. Their total number has been reported in some narrations as ten thousand, as twelve thousand in some others and as fifteen thousand in still other.

### **The most lethal attack on Madīnah**

The armed force that fought against Muslims in the battle of Badr

was that of one thousand men. Then, the army that attacked in the battle of Uḥud had three thousand men. This time, the numerical strength of the attacking forces was greater than it was any time before that - the equipment and the combined power of the Arab and Jewish tribes were also to be counted as additional factors.

### Three ingredients of Muslim war effort

When the information about this aggressive united front reached the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the very first verbal reaction came out from him in the words:

حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ

Allah is all-sufficient for us, and the best One to trust in - 3:173.

After that, he assembled opinion leaders from among the Emigrants and Helpers together and went into consultation with them. Although, the blessed recipient of *Wahy* (revelation) really needs no consultation for he acts directly with the permission of Allah Ta'ālā. But, there were two advantages in having such consultation: (1) To initiate and establish the Sunnah (practice) of consultation in the Muslim community and (2) to revive mutual liaison and unity in the hearts of the believers and to persuade them to the need of helping and supporting each other. After that, they talked about matters of defence and the physical resources needed in fighting a war. Present among the group of consultants there was Sayyidnā Salmān al-Fārisīؓ who had recently freed himself from the artificially imposed slavery of a Jew and had devoted himself to the service of Islam. He advised that in his country, the Persian kings have used trenches they arranged to be dug across the enemy line of attack. This had always helped stop the enemy. Accepting his advice, the Holy Prophet ﷺ ordered that trenches be dug - and he himself participated with others doing that.

### The digging of trenches

It was decided to dig this trench on the entire passage way behind the mount of Sal' which could be used by the enemy to come into Madīnah from the north. The ground marking of the length and width of this trench was personally drawn by the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Beginning from Shaikhayn, this trench came as far as the western corner of the mount of Sal' and later it was extended to the intersection of the valleys of Buṭḥān

and Rātāunā. The total length of this trench was approximately three and a half miles. The precise measurement of the width and depth could not be ascertained from any narration. But, it is obvious that the width and depth would have also been special, of the kind the enemy would have not found easy to cross.

It has appeared in the narration of the event relating to Sayyidnā Salmān رضي الله عنه digging the trench that he used to dig his allotted portion of the trench which, at the end of the day, came to be five yards long and five yards deep (Maḥzarī). From this, it can be said that the depth of the trench was five yards.

### **The size of the Islamic 'army'**

At that time, Muslims were a total of three thousand in number along with a total of thirty six horses.

### **Participant age of maturity was set at fifteen years**

Some non-pubert children had also come out with the Islamic 'army' with the desire to defend their faith. The Holy Prophet ﷺ asked children below the age of fifteen years to leave. Those fifteen year old were accepted - included therein were Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar, Zayd Ibn Thābit, Abu Sa'īd al-Khudrī and Barā' Ibn 'Āzib رضي الله عنهم اجمعين. When this Islamic force was ready to march for battle, the hypocrites who normally kept a face and remained intermingled among Muslims, started backing out. Some bolted away incognito. Others came up with false excuses and tried to get the permission of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to go back. This was a new trouble that rose from within. Some of the cited verses have been revealed about these very hypocrites. (Qurṭubī)

### **Islamic nationality and Islamic unity do not contradict administrative and social division**

For this Jihād, the Holy Prophet ﷺ appointed Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn Ḥārithah رضي الله عنه as the standard bearer of the *Muhājirīn* and Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn 'Ubādah رضي الله عنه as the standard bearer of the *Anṣār*. At that time, the mutual brotherhood among the *Muhājirīn* and the *Anṣār* stood established on very firm foundations. All of them were brothers to each other. But, it was in view of administrative convenience that the leadership of the *Muhājirīn* was separated from the leadership of the *Anṣār*. From this, we learn that Islamic nationality and Islamic unity are

not contradictory to administrative and social division. In fact, by placing the burden of responsibility on each group helped strengthen the bond of mutual confidence and cooperation. And in the very first assignment, that is, in the digging of trenches before this battle, this mutual cooperation became all too evident as described below:

### **The job of digging the trenches was spread over the whole army**

The Holy Prophet ﷺ divided the whole army of the *Muhājirīn* and the *Anṣār* in groups of ten men each and made every group of ten men responsible for digging forty yards of the trench. Since Sayyidnā Salmān al-Fārisī was the one who had advised the digging of the trench, knew the job, was strong and was neither one of the *Anṣār* nor one of the *Muhājirīn*, it created a sort of competition among the *Anṣār* and *Muhājirīn* for each of the two wanted to have him with them. The matter reached to the extent that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had to intervene in order to avoid any dispute. He gave his verdict by saying: *سَلْمَانُ مِنَّا أَهْلُ الْبَيْتِ* (Salmān is part of our family).

### **The discrimination of local and foreign in functional expertise**

The universal wont in our time is that people do not like to treat those non-resident and non-local at par with them. But, this was a place where every group felt proud of having the competent one on their side and with them. It was for this reason that the Holy Prophet ﷺ included him in his family on his own and thus put an end to the dispute. Then, he practically picked up some *Muhājirīn* and some *Anṣār* to form a group of ten which included Sayyidnā ‘Amr Ibn ‘Awf رضي الله عنه, Sayyidnā Ḥudhaifah and others who were from among the *Muhājirīn*.

### **A great miracle**

By chance, in the section of the trench entrusted with Sayyidnā Salmān and others with him, a huge, hard and glossy rock showed up. Sayyidnā Salmān's colleague, Sayyidnā ‘Amr Ibn ‘Awf رضي الله عنه says, "This rock broke our implements and we failed to cut it apart. Then I suggested to Salmān that though it is possible to dig the trench by-passing the huge rock and join it up with the main trench with a minor crookedness in it, but we should not deviate from the line drawn by the Holy Prophet ﷺ as based on our opinion. So, you go, tell the Holy Prophet ﷺ about the position here and get an order from him about what we should do now."

### Divine reminders

It is strange that in this three and a half mile stretch of land no one from among the diggers of the trench faced any impediment which would render him helpless. The only one who did face it was Sayyidnā Salmān ؓ who had given the advice of digging a trench and the whole project had started on his advice. To him Allah Ta'ālā showed that there was no way out even after digging and making a perfect trench - except turning to Allah Ta'ālā for help in the face of the failure of all implements and instruments. Here, these blessed souls were being taught that assembling material means to the measure of capacity and ability was obligatory, but to place trust in these was not correct. The trust of a believer - even after having assembled all possible material means - should be in Allah Ta'ālā alone.

Sayyidnā Salmān ؓ presented himself before the Holy Prophet ﷺ and told him about what had happened. At that time, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was himself working in his part of the trench. He was busy hauling the dug out earth from the trench. Sayyidnā Barā' Ibn 'Āzib ؓ says, "I saw him. Dust had covered his blessed body in a manner that the skin on his front and back was not visible." Rather than give Sayyidnā Salmān any advice or order, he accompanied him in person to the problem spot. With the ten Ṣaḥābah busy digging the trench with Sayyidnā Salmān, he too went down into the trench and joined the diggers. He took the pickaxe in his blessed hands, struck at the rock and recited the verse: *تَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا* (*tammāt kalimatu rabbika sidqa*: And the Word of your Lord is perfect in truth... - al-An'ām, 6:115). With this one single stroke from it, one third portion of the rock was cut off and released from this rock was a streak of light. After that, he struck at the rock once again and recited the said verse upto the end, that is: *تَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا* (*tammāt kalimatu rabbika sidqan wa 'adla* : And the Word of your Lord is perfect in truth and justice - al-An'ām, 6:115). Cut off with this second stroke was an additional one third portion of the rock which released a streak of light as before. The third time, he recited the same verse in full and executed the third stroke. With it, the rock was all finished. The Holy Prophet ﷺ came out of the trench, picked up the sheet wrap he had left at the edge of the trench and sat down on one side of it. At that time, Sayyidnā Salmān al-Fārisī ؓ said, "Yā Rasulallah, every time struck at the rock,

ever time I saw a light coming out of the rock." The Holy Prophet ﷺ asked Sayyidnā Salmān, "Have you really seen this light?" He said, "Yā Rasūlallāh, I have seen it with my own eyes."

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "In the light that was released after the first strike, I saw the palaces of the cities of Yaman and those of Cyrus and Angel Jibra'īl told me: 'your *Ummah* will conquer these cities.' And when I struck at the rock the second time, I was shown the red palaces of the Byzantines and Angel Jibra'īl gave the good news, 'your *Ummah* will conquer these cities as well.' " After having heard this, all Muslims felt at peace and became assured of their great successes in the future.

### **Hypocrites throw taunts at Muslims for believing in their Prophet's promises**

At that time, the hypocrites who were part of the digging operations of the trench, started asking other Muslims, 'It is strange that you people are not surprised at what Muḥammad ﷺ is telling you. Is it not that he is making all those baseless promises to you in the depth of this trench being dug in Yathrib where he is claiming to be seeing the palaces of Ḥīrah (in the South) and Madā'in ( in the North)? And on top of it all, he is telling you that it is you people who are going to conquer them! Just look at yourself. Here you are, digging and digging, forgetful of all your needs. Frankly, you do not even have the time to take care of your human compulsions. Still, is it you who are going to conquer the countries of Cyrus and others?' Thereupon, it was about this very event that, in the twelfth verse cited above, it was revealed:

إِذْ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ مَا وَعَدَنَا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ، إِلَّا غُرُورًا

(And (remember) when the hypocrites and those having malady in their hearts were saying, "Allah and His messenger did not promise us but deceitfully; - 12). Here, in this verse, by saying: *الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ* (and those having malady in their hearts), reference is being made to the state of the same hypocrites hidden in whose hearts there was that disease of hypocrisy.

Just imagine the kind of time it was, a severe trial indeed. At stake was the very faith of Muslims for they had to believe in the word of the Holy Prophet ﷺ with the full backing of their mind and heart despite being threatened by disbelievers from all sides. They had no servants to

dig their trench for them. They were doing this hard work with their own hands braving the lashing winter. The unfriendly weather, the approaching enemy factor, theirs was a general climate of fear all around. In a situation like that, it was not easy to be sure of even one's defence and survival within whatever means were available. How could they go on from here and start believing in the good news of the conquests of the great kingdoms of Byzantine and Persia? But, the value of *ʾīmān* (faith) is the highest of all deeds for the reason that they, even when facing totally contrary causes and conditions, did not have the least doubt or qualm of conscience about what the Holy Prophet ﷺ had told them.

### Seniors must share every trial with their juniors - Great guidance for Muslims

Who does not know that the Ṣaḥābah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ were such selfless servants of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that they never wanted to have him do the hard labor of digging the trench with them, but it was the personal initiative of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that he chose to share this hard labor with his noble companions to mollify their hearts and teach them their essential lesson to put mutual brotherhood to practice. Of course, the noble companions staked their lives for the Holy Prophet ﷺ on the basis of his most perfect attributes as prophet and messenger of Allah, but of the many outward causes for this attachment, there was this major cause that he would be with them on all occasions facing all sorts of trials and pains like everybody else. When he did that, nobody ever thought of what we know as a class difference. There was no ruler and there was no one being ruled. There was no king around and there was no subject paying homage. Who was the man in power and who was the man from the masses? This kind of difference was unimaginable at that time. Unfortunately, from the time the Muslim wielders of power abandoned this Sunnah (the blessed practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ,) that was the time these differences gushed forth bringing all sorts of tests and trials in their wake.

### The master prescription of achieving success against something hard to accomplish

In the event mentioned above, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has recited the verse of the Qurʾān: *تَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا لَا مُبَدَّلَ لِكَلِمَتِهِ* (And the Word of your Lord is perfect in truth and justice. None is there to change His

Words - al-An‘ām, 6:115) while striking at this invincible rock. This tells us that the recitation of this verse is a tested prescription for the resolution of something difficult.

### **The selfless mutual cooperation of the noble Ṣaḥābah**

We already know that there were ten men appointed for the digging of the trench at every ten yards. But, it is obvious that some people are stronger and can finish their job sooner than others. The same was true here. The noble Ṣaḥābah who finished their allotted portion of digging would never go on to sit doing nothing and thinking that their duty was over. In fact, they would help out other Ṣaḥābah whose portion of digging was still incomplete. (Qurṭubī, Maḥzarī)

### **Three and a half mile long trench was completed in six days**

The outcome of the hard work put in by the noble Ṣaḥābah, may Allah be pleased with them all, was before everybody in six days in that such a long, wide and deep trench stood all completed within that short period of time. (Maḥzarī)

### **An open miracle in the feast hosted by Sayyidnā Jābir ؓ**

It was during the digging of this very trench that the well known event came to pass. On one of those days, when Sayyidnā Jābir ؓ looked at the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he felt deep down in his heart that he was really affected by hunger. He went to his wife and told her, "If you have something with you, cook it. I simply cannot bear by seeing this effect of hunger on his blessed person." His wife said, "We have about a ṣā‘ of barley grains in our home. I am going to grind them and make some flour." One ṣā‘ is equal to about three and a half kilograms in terms of our weights. So, his wife got busy with the grinding of barley, making flour, preparing dough and baking bread. There was a goat kid in the house. Sayyidnā Jābir ؓ slaughtered it, cooked the meat and was ready to go out and invite the Holy Prophet ﷺ in when his wife called out to him saying, "Look, there is a crowd of the Ṣaḥābah with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Do something and somehow invite only the Holy Prophet ﷺ alone. Please, do not put me to disgrace by causing such a big crowd of the noble Ṣaḥābah come in with the Holy Prophet ﷺ." Sayyidnā Jābir ؓ, acting realistically, made the actual situation fully clear before the Holy Prophet ﷺ telling him that they had only that much of food in the house. But, as for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he made a public announcement before the

entire work force asking everyone to come to the feast at Sayyidnā Jābir's home. Sayyidnā Jābir ﷺ was struck with wonder. When he reached home, his wife was extremely disturbed. She asked, "Did you tell the Holy Prophet ﷺ about the actual situation at home and the amount of food available?" Sayyidnā Jābir ﷺ said, "Yes, that I have told him." This put his wife at peace and she said, "Then we have nothing to worry about. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is our master. Let him have it the way he wishes."

Any more detail of the event is unnecessary at this place. It is enough to know the outcome that the Holy Prophet ﷺ took it upon himself to distribute the bread and curry to everybody with his own blessed hands and see that they are entertained and fed satisfactorily. As a result, the whole crowd ate to their fill. And Sayyidnā Jābir ﷺ says that "even after everybody having finished eating, our stock pot showed no dearth of meat, nor our kneaded flour any signs of decrease. All of us in the family ate to our heart's content and whatever remained we sent to the neighbours."

Thus, when the digging of the trench was finished within six days, the Confederate army arrived and the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his noble Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, went into battle formation with the Mount of Sal' thoughtfully kept towards their rear.

### **The Jews of the tribe of Banī Quraizah break their pledge and join the Confederate aggressors**

That was a time when a group of three thousand ill-equipped people standing up to fight against an equipped army of some ten to twelve thousand men was something far too wild to believe. On top of all that, there came up a new factor. Out of the Confederate forces, Ḥuyayy Ibn Akḥṭab, the chief of the tribe of Banū Naḍir who had contributed most in rallying everyone against the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his Muslim followers, took another step. He reached Madīnah and conspired to win over the Jewish tribe of Banū Quraizah over their side. The situation was that Banū Quraizah and the Holy Prophet ﷺ already had a peace treaty signed between them. This was a solemn undertaking and the two parties naturally had no apprehensions from each other. Ka'b Ibn Asad was the chief of the tribe of Banū Quraizah. Ḥuyayy Ibn Akḥṭab went to see him. When Ka'b heard about his reported arrival, he had the gate of his castle closed, so that this man would not reach him. But, Ḥuyayy Ibn Akḥṭab

hanged out there, he called and called and insisted that the gate be opened. Ka'b told him from inside the gate, "We have already made a peace treaty with Muḥammad ﷺ and we know of nothing from his side other than truth, honesty and strict adherence to the treaty right to this day, therefore, we are bound with this treaty and cannot join hands with you." For long, this dialogue between the two continued with Ḥuyayy Ibn Akḥṭab insisting that the gate be opened and that Ka'b should talk to him and the later kept refusing to do that while staying inside the closed gate. But, consequently when Ḥuyayy Ibn Akḥṭab challenged Ka'b's sense of shame in that he was treating a visitor in such a crude manner, the gate was opened. Once called in, Ḥuyayy Ibn Akḥṭab painted such a rosy picture of his proposals that Ka'b ultimately fell into the trap laid out by him and gave his word that he would take part in the Confederate expedition. When Ka'b related what he had done before other chiefs of his tribe, they all said in one voice, "You did something terrible. You broke your pledge with Muslims for no reason whatsoever and that by going along with the other side you have exposed your own self to danger." Ka'b too was affected by their comments and even repented for what he had done. But, things had gone out of his control by that time and this very pledge-breaking finally went on to become the cause of the destruction of Banū Quraizah as it would be mentioned later.

At that particular time, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the noble Ṣaḥābah got this information, they were shocked by this breach of trust from Banū Quraizah. What worried them most was the strange situation created for them. They had a trench dug across the line of the marching forces of the Confederates who were coming from outside Madīnah. But, these Banū Quraizah people were right there inside Madīnah. How were they going to defend against them? About this when the Qur'ān says that the disbelieving forces of the Confederate army had overtaken you: مِنْ فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ (from above you and from below you -10), Tafsīr authorities say that the expression: فَوْق (from above) means the Banū Quraizah and those who came from below them (أَسْفَلَ) mean the rest of the Confederates.

To find out the reality of this breach of trust and to assess the correct situation in the whole matter, the Holy Prophet ﷺ sent a deputation comprising Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn Mu'adh رضي الله عنه, the chief of the Anṣār tribe of

Aws and Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn 'Ubādah, the chief of the tribe of Khazraj, to Ka'b in order to talk to him about the matter. The instruction given to them was that should the event of this breach of trust turn out to be incorrect, they were to tell the whole truth before all the Ṣaḥābah openly. And should it turn out to be true, they should, on their return, say something ambivalent which will be a message only we shall understand while the rest of the Ṣaḥābah will remain safe from facing any panic because of it.

When both these elders named Sa'd reached there, they saw open proofs of the breach of pledge all over which even went to the extent of hot exchanges of words between them and Ka'b. On their return, following the instructions given to them earlier, they reported back their findings in unclear words and thus informed the Holy Prophet ﷺ that the event of the breaking of the pledge was true.

At the time when the Jewish tribe of Banū Quraizah, once an ally of Muslims, also joined the war against them, something else started happening. The hypocrisy of people who posed to be a part of the Muslim community lost its cover. Some of them became far too vocal and started saying things against the Holy Prophet ﷺ as was mentioned earlier in: *وَأَذَى يَقُولُ الْمَنَّافُونَ* (and when said the hypocrites - 12). Then, they were others who cooked up all sorts of excuses to run away from the battlefield and sought the permission of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to do that - which has been mentioned in verse 13: *إِنَّ بُيُوتَنَا عَوْرَةٌ* (Our homes are vulnerable).

Now according to the present state of the battle front, the Confederate forces could not march in because of the trench with the Muslim army positioned on the other side. There was almost a continuous exchange of arrows between them all the time. This state of affairs dragged on for nearly a month. They could neither confront each other in some open or decisive battle, nor could they turn heedless towards the opponent for any extended period of time. Day and night, the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his noble Ṣaḥābah would stand guard by the trench. Although, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was personally involved in this hard task like everybody else, yet the thought that all his companions were suffering from extreme anxiety due to this impasse was very painful for him.

### **A strategic plan of the Holy Prophet ﷺ**

It was already in the knowledge of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that the chief

of the tribe of Ghiṭfān had joined hands with these Jews as tempted by the greed of having the fruits and dates of Khaibar. He sent an emissary to the two chiefs of the tribe of Ghiṭfān, 'Uyaynah Ibn Ḥiṣn and Abū al-Hārith Ibn 'Amr, with the message: "If you leave the battlefield with your men, we shall give you one-third of the fruit of Madīnah." This negotiation was still on. The two chief had agreed and a peace treaty was close to be signed. But, as was his wont and habit, the Holy Prophet ﷺ decided to consult the noble Ṣaḥābah in this matter. He called the two Sa'ds, the chiefs of the tribe of Aws and Khazraj, that is, Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn 'Ubādah and Sa'd Ibn Mu'ādh, and sought their advice.

### **The Faith, the Sense of Shame and the Granite of a Determination shown by a Ṣaḥābi of the Rasūl of Allah**

Both of them said, "Ya Rasūlallāh, if you have orders from Allah Ta'ālā to do this thing, then, we cannot dare say anything. We shall accept. If not, tell us: Is it your personal opinion or you have devised this as a measure to save us from all this hardship and suffering?"

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Neither is there a Divine order for it, nor do I have any personal inclination to do so. In fact, I have come up with this via media in view of your pain and suffering because you are surrounded from all sides. So, I simply wished to shatter the power of the adversary in this manner without losing any time." Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn Mu'ādh ؓ said, "Ya Rasūlallāh, when we worshipped idols, we did neither know Allah nor did we worship Him. At that time, these people could not dare look at a single fruit of our city with greedy eyes - except that they be our guests and we offer some of it to them by way of hospitality, or that they would buy it from us and take it away with them. Today, when Allah Ta'ālā has, in His infinite grace, given us the ability of knowing Him, and has bestowed upon us the honor of Islam, shall we, on this day, let these people have our fruits and our wealth and our properties? We need no peace and compromise from them. As for us, we are not going to give them anything but the cutting edge of our swords - to the extent that Allah Ta'ālā Himself gives the ultimate verdict between us and them."

When the Holy Prophet ﷺ heard Sayyidnā Sa'd ؓ and saw this high determination and this great enthusiasm in the matter of his 'Īmān, he cast that thought of his aside and said, "You now have the right to do

what you wish." Sayyidnā Sa'd رضي الله عنه took the peace treaty document from his blessed hands and erased the writing on it because it was not signed yet. 'Uyaynah and Ḥārith, the chiefs of the Ghitfān tribes who were present in the meeting ready to sign this treaty found themselves personally unnerved in their hearts at this demonstration of power and determination from the noble Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

### The wound received by Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn Mu'adh رضي الله عنه and his prayer

On the other side, the activity of throwing arrows and stones on each other continued unabated. Sayyidnā Sa'd رضي الله عنه had gone into the fortress of Banū Ḥārithah to see his mother where women had been housed under security. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها says, "At that time, I too was in the same fortress and the injunctions of *ḥijāb* for women were yet to be enforced. I saw that Sa'd Ibn Mu'adh was wearing a small coat of mail from which his hands were protruding out rather awkwardly and his mother was telling him to make haste, go and join the men fighting with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. I said to his mother, "A larger coat of mail would have been better for him. I apprehend that his hands and feet showing out of his coat of mail may be exposed to danger." His mother said, "It does not matter. Whatever Allah has to do is what has to happen."

When Sayyidnā Mu'adh رضي الله عنه reached the battlefield, he was hit by an arrow which cut through his medial arm vein. At that time, Sayyidnā Mu'adh رضي الله عنه made the following prayer:

"O Allah, if there is yet another attack by the Quraish destined to come against the Holy Prophet ﷺ, please keep me alive for that, because I have no worthwhile wish left in me but that I fight the people who have caused all sorts of pain to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, expelled him from his homeland and falsified his person and mission. And if, in Your ultimate knowledge, this process of war has come to an end, please bless me with the death of a martyr in the way of Allah - but, let not death come to me until such time that the treachery of Banī Quraizah is avenged as the parting delight of my eyes."

Allah Ta'ālā answered both these prayers from him. This event of al-Aḥzāb was made to be the last attack of the disbelievers. After that, began the period of Muslim victories. First came Khaibar, then Makkah al-Mukarramah and then other areas. As for the event relating to Banū

Quraizah, it follows later as to how they were brought forth as captives and their case was entrusted with none else but Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn Mu'adh ؓ for the final verdict. It was in accordance with his verdict that their men were killed and their women and children were taken prisoners.

During this event of al-Aḥzāb, the noble Ṣaḥābah and the Holy Prophet ﷺ had to maintain an all-night vigilance throughout the trench area. The slightest relaxation at any time had to be broken at the faintest sound of commotion from any side. In fact, the Holy Prophet ﷺ would himself put his arms back on and come out in the battle area. Umm ul-Mu'minīn Sayyidah Umm Salamah رضى الله عنها says, "Every single night, this would happen several times that he would come in for a little rest and then heard some sound and went out immediately. The same thing happened again. The moment he would put his back for rest, he would hear some sound and leave as usual."

Umm al-Mu'minīn Sayyidah Umm Salamah رضى الله عنها also says, "I have been with the Holy Prophet ﷺ in many battles such as Muraisī, Khaibar, Ḥudaibiyah, the battles of the conquest of Makkah and Ḥunain. None of these caused more hardship on the Holy Prophet ﷺ as did the battle of Khandaq. Muslims also received a lot more wounds in this battle. Then, they were hit by the severity of the winter chill as well. Furthermore, their circumstances were extremely straightened in terms of food and water available to them. (Maḥzarī)

### **The Holy Prophet ﷺ had to miss four Ṣalāhs in this Jihād**

One of those days, the confronting disbelievers decided to launch a joint and simultaneous attack and force their way ahead by somehow crossing the trench. Once they had resolved to do that, they threw themselves dauntlessly against the Muslims and their archers rained their arrows so incessantly that the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his noble Ṣaḥābah had to remain so engaged throughout the day that they did not find any respite to even make their Ṣalāh. As a result, four Ṣalāhs missed during the day had to be performed at the time of 'Ishā'.

### **The prayers of the Holy Prophet ﷺ**

When things became unbearably hard on Muslims, the Holy Prophet ﷺ prayed against the Confederate forces of the disbelievers, doing that for three days consecutively on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday inside

Masjid al-Faṭḥ imploring Allah Ta‘ālā to bring defeat on the Confederates and victory for Muslims. It was on the third day, on Wednesday between Zuhr and ‘Aṣr that the prayer was answered. Pleased, the Holy Prophet ﷺ came to his noble Ṣaḥābah and gave them the glad tiding of victory. They say that after that time no Muslim faced any hardship any more. (Maḥzarī)

### **The unraveling of the causes of victory**

In the combined forces of the enemy, the tribe of Ghitfān was a power to reckon with. It was the most perfect power of Allah Ta‘ālā that put the light of faith in the heart of Nu‘aim Ibn Mas‘ūd who, as destiny would have it, was one of them. He presented himself before the Holy Prophet ﷺ, confessed to his faith in Islam and told him that no one from among his people is aware of the fact that he has become a Muslim. Then, he wished that he be told as to how he could serve Islam. The Holy Prophet ﷺ told him, ‘You being all alone here would not be able to do anything worthwhile. If you can go back to your people, be with them and still do something in defence of Islam, then, go ahead and do it.’ Nu‘aim Ibn Mas‘ūd was an intelligent man. He conceived of a plan of action in his heart and sought the permission of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to be given the choice of saying what is expedient when he reaches those people. He gave the permission.

From here, Nu‘aim Ibn Mas‘ūd went to see the tribe of Banū Quraizah with whom he had age-old relations since the time of Jāhiliyyah. He said to them: ‘O people of Banū Quraizah, you know that I am an old friend of yours.’ They said, ‘We have no doubt about your friendship.’ After that, Sayyidnā Nu‘aim Ibn Mas‘ūd ﷺ addressed the chiefs of Banū Quraizah as a well-wisher and asked them, ‘You know that none of us - be they the Quraish of Makkah or our tribe of Ghitfān or the several other Jewish tribes - have their homes here. If these people face defeat and run, they do not lose much. Your case is different from all of them. Madīnah is your home. Your women and your properties are all here. Now, if you were to participate in the war effort with them and if, later, when these people taste defeat and run, what would happen to you? Would you be able to fight against the Muslims all by yourselves?’

Therefore, as one who wishes the best for you, I advise you not to take part in the joint war effort with them until such time that they do not put

with you a certain number of their selected chiefs as ransom and guarantee that they would not throw you all at the mercy of Muslims and run.' The people of Banū Quraizah found this advice good. They appreciated it and said so before him.

After that, Nu'aim Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه reached the Quraish chiefs and said to them, 'You know that I am your friend and that I have nothing to do with Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وسلم. I have a little bit of information with me. Being one who wishes well for you, it is necessary that I pass on that information to you - of course, on the condition that you will not disclose my name as its source. Here is that information: The Jews of the tribe of Banī Quraizah have now regretted their decision after they had concluded their pact with you. They have sent a message to Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وسلم about it telling him that they will be willing to go along with him subject to the condition that they would hand over some chiefs of the tribes of Quraish and Ghitfān and that he would then put them to the sword. Once that was done, they would join hands with him and fight against all of them. Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وسلم has accepted this proposal made by them. Now the Banū Quraizah were going to demand that you put some of your chiefs as ransom with them and it was upto them to figure out what they were going to do in their case.

After that, Nu'aim Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه went to his own tribe, Ghitfān and to them, he passed on the same information. Concurrent to this, Abū Sufyān appointed 'Ikrimah Ibn Abī Jahl on behalf of the tribe of Quraish and Warqā' Ibn Ghitfān on behalf of the tribe of Ghitfān to the mission of going to Banū Quraizah and telling them that their war supplies were diminishing and their men were getting tired of having to fight continuously. So, according to the provision of their pact, they were looking forward to their help and participation. The tribe of Banū Quraizah, acting in the light of 'their' (latest) understanding of the pact, told them that they will not take part in the war effort with them until such time that some chiefs from both of their tribes have been placed in their custody as ransom (guarantee, hostage). 'Ikrimah and Warqā', the two emissaries carried the message back to Abū Sufyān. As a result, the chiefs of Quraish and Ghitfān came to believe that the information given by Sayyidnā Nu'aim Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه was correct. So they sent a return message to Banū Quraizah telling them that they were not going to let

them have any of their men. Now it was up to them. If they wished they could join the war effort with them and if they did not, they were free not to. When Banū Quraizah saw this state of affairs, their belief in what Nu'aim Ibn Mas'ud رضي الله عنه had said became all the more firm. It was in this manner that Allah Ta'ālā caused a rift in the ranks of the enemy through a person who came from their camp and soon after they lost their foothold on the battlefield.

Along with it there came another calamity upon them. Allah Ta'ālā caused a cold stormy wind overtake them which uprooted their tents and blew their cooking pots from their stoves. As for these, they were only outward causes generated by Allah Ta'ālā to make them desert the battlefield. More came in the form of His angels who were sent to put awe in their hearts inwardly too. These two things have been mentioned at the beginning of the verses cited above as follows: *فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا وَجُنُودًا أَلْمَ تَرَوُهَا* (and We sent upon them a wind, and the forces (of angels) you did not see - 9). As a consequence, they had no choice but to run.

### **The event of Sayyidnā Ḥudhaifah رضي الله عنه going into enemy lines and reporting back about conditions prevailing there**

On the other side, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ heard the report of what Nu'aim Ibn Mas'ud رضي الله عنه had accomplished and how a rift was caused among the Confederate forces, he was strongly inclined towards the idea of someone from among the Muslims going into the enemy lines and returning with the much needed intelligence about the enemy formations and intentions. But, this severe and chilly wind storm that was sent upon the enemy, however, did affect the whole of Madīnah and Muslims too were affected by it. The chill was bitter. The time was night. The noble Ṣaḥābah were, after the heavy grind of a long day, sitting all shattered because of the confrontation, huddled together feeling the pinch of bitter cold. Addressing the gathering, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Is there someone who would stand up and go into the enemy lines and bring some news about them and may Allah Ta'ālā admit him into Jannah?" Of course, this was a gathering of Ṣaḥābah who would have normally staked their lives at his call. But, the objective conditions prevailing with them were such that no one could stand up. The Holy Prophet ﷺ got busy with Ṣalāh. After remaining busy with Ṣalāh for a while, he addressed the gathering again saying, "Is there someone here who would bring me some

news from the enemy lines and receive Jannah in return for it?" This time too, silence prevailed over the entire gathering. No one rose. The Holy Prophet ﷺ got busy with Ṣalāh once again. After some time, it was the third time that he made the same appeal, "Whoever does it shall be in Jannah with me." But, everyone was so broken down from fatigue, hunger and chill and so utterly helpless that no one could still bring himself up to rise.

The narrator of the *ḥadīth*, Sayyidnā Ḥudhaifah Ibn Yamān, says, 'at that time the Holy Prophet ﷺ called me by name and said, "Ḥudhaifah, you go." My condition was no different from the others. But, once I was ordered by name, I had no option but to obey. I stood up while my whole body was shivering with bitter cold. He passed his blessed hand over my head and my face and said, "Go into the enemy lines and just bring back some news and do nothing before you return to me." Then he prayed for my safety. I picked up my bow and arrows, tied up my own clothes on my body and took my way towards them.

When I started moving ahead from here, I noticed something strange. The shivering sensation that had me in its grips while I was in the tent was all gone. Actually, I was walking as if one was inside a hot bath all the way up to enemy camp. Once there, I saw that the wind storm had uprooted their tents and upturned their cooking pots. Abū Sufyān was seated by the make-shift fire place relaxing before the heat. When I saw this (a sitting target), I trained my bow and arrow over my shoulders and was about to shoot Abū Sufyān with my arrow, I remembered the order given by the Holy Prophet ﷺ: 'Do nothing before you return back to me.' Abū Sufyān was absolutely within the striking range of my arrow, but it was in consideration of this order of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that I disengaged my arrow from the bow.

Disturbed by the condition around him, Abū Sufyān wanted to announce the plan to withdraw. But, in order to do that, it was necessary that he should talk to responsible people from among the combined armed forces. The night was dark and the place was desolate. The danger of a snooping spy nearby who may overhear what they were talking about was very much present. Therefore, Abū Sufyān did something smart. Before starting to talk, he asked the whole gathering to recognize the person sitting next to everyone so that no one who is not one of them

would be able to hear what they said.'

Sayyidnā Ḥudhaifah رضي الله عنه says, "Now, I was scared. What if the person sitting next to me were to ask me: Who are you? If so, my cover will blow up.' It was with great presence of mind and courage that he himself took the initiative, and slapping the hand of the person sitting next to him, he himself asked: Who are you? The man said, 'Strange that you do not know me. I am so and so the son of so and so.' He was a member of the tribe of Hawāzin. Thus, Sayyidnā Ḥudhaifah was saved by Allah Ta'ālā from being arrested on the spot.

When Abū Sufyān ensured it that the gathering was that of his own people and that there was no stranger present among them, he related the disturbing conditions around them, how the tribe of Banū Quraizah had committed a breach of pledge and the extent to which their war supplies had shrunk. After having recounted the situation, he said: In my opinion, all of us should now leave and go back and I too am going back. Immediately thereafter, a state of panic hit the Confederate army and everyone started going back.

Sayyidnā Ḥudhaifah رضي الله عنه says, "As I started going back from there, I felt as if I had some sort of a hot bath around me that was shielding me from the bitter chill. When I reached the home base, I found the Holy Prophet ﷺ busy with Ṣalāh. When he turned for Salām, I reported the event. Pleased with this happy news, the Holy Prophet ﷺ started laughing - to the extent that, in the darkness of the night, his blessed teeth were seen shining. After that, the Holy Prophet ﷺ made room for me close to his feet and covered my body with a part of the sheet he had wrapped around him until I went to sleep in that condition. When morning came, he himself woke me up saying: *قُمْ يَا تَوْمَانَ* ('Up O big sleeper!')

### Good News after the ambition of the disbelievers is shattered

According to a narration of Sayyidnā Sulaymān Ibn Ṣurad رضي الله عنه appearing in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī, when the Confederate forces retreated, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

الآن نَعْرُوهُمْ وَلَا يَغْزُونَنَا نَحْنُ نَسِيرُ إِلَيْهِمْ (بخاری)

Now, they shall not attack us, instead, we will attack them and run over their territory - al-Bukhārī as in Maḥzarī.

After having said that, the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his noble Ṣaḥābah returned to the city of Madīnah and it was only after a month that Muslims formally disarmed themselves.

### A special note

This event pertaining Sayyidnā Ḥudhaifah ؓ appears in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim. It is an example-setter of great class as well as a bearer of many elements of guidance and miracles of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Those who ponder over it would themselves find these out, therefore, any more details are not needed.

### The Battle of Banū Quraizah

The Holy Prophet ﷺ had just about reached Madīnah when suddenly came Sayyidnā Jibra'īl al-Amīn ؑ in the guise of the Ṣaḥābī, Sayyidnā Diḥyah Ibn Khalīfah al-Kalbī ؓ and said, "Even though you people have disarmed yourselves but the angels have not. Allah Ta'ālā commands you to attack Banū Quraizah and I am going right there ahead of you."

To announce this in Madīnah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ sent a proclaimer who proclaimed this order of the Holy Prophet ﷺ before the people making sure that it reaches everyone. The order was: لَا يُصَلِّينَ أَحَدٌ الْعَصْرَ إِلَّا فِي بَنِي قُرَيْظَةَ (Let no man make his Ṣalāh of 'Aṣr until he reaches Banū Quraizah).

All Companions got ready for this second Jihād immediately and marched towards Banū Quraizah. On their way came the time of 'Aṣr. Some of them, following the outward sense of the prophetic order, did not make their Ṣalāh of 'Aṣr en route - instead, made it only after having reached the designated destination of Banū Quraizah. And there were others who thought that objective of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was to reach Banū Quraizah within the time for 'Aṣr. So, they thought, if they made their Ṣalāh en route and reached there within the time for 'Aṣr, then, it would not be contrary to the order of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Thus, they made their Ṣalāh of 'Aṣr as it became due while still en route.

### In the difference of Mujtahids, no side is sinful or blameworthy

When the Holy Prophet ﷺ was informed about this difference in the practical compliance of his order on the part of the noble Ṣaḥābah, he put no blame on any of the two parties; in fact, he approved of both. From

here, the religious scholars of the Muslim community have deduced the principle that none of the different sayings of *Mujtahid 'Ulamā'* who are *Mujtahids* in the real sense of the term and have the required expertise and ability of *Ijtihād* (arriving at a Shari'ah-based religious solution of problems at the highest conceivable level) can be called 'sin' or 'blameworthy.' For both such differing sides, reward is recorded against their action as based on their respective *Ijtihād*.

At the time of marching out for *Jihād* against Banū Quraizah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ handed over the Muslim flag to Sayyidnā 'Alī al-Murtaḍā ؑ. Hearing about the coming of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his noble Ṣaḥābah, the Banū Quraizah decided to shut themselves into their fort. The Islamic army laid a siege around it.

### **The Speech of Ka'b, the Chief of Banū Quraizah**

Ka'b, the Chief of the tribe of Banū Quraizah who had broken the pledge given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in favor of a compact with the Confederates, assembled his people together, told them about the delicate situation and presented three possible solutions of the problem:

"To begin with, the first option is that you all embrace Islam and follow Muḥammad ﷺ because, and I tell you on oath, you already know that he is in the right and the prophecy of his coming is there in your Torah which you recite. If you were to do this, not only that you will find safety for your life, property and children in this mortal world but also that your Hereafter too will turn out to be good and correct.

The second option is that you start by first killing your women and children with your own hands and then go on to fight and kill them with all power at your command until such time that all of you are also killed in the process.

The third option is that you make a surprise attack on Muslims on the day of Sabbath - for Muslims know that fighting and killing on the day of Sabbath is unlawful in our religion. Therefore, they would not be expecting an attack from our side on that particular day. Now, if we were to launch a sudden attack, it is possible that we may succeed."

After having heard this address of their chief, Ka'b, his people replied that they will never accept the first option of embracing Islam, because

they did not want to abandon the Torah and start believing in some other Book. As for the second option, what wrong had their women and children done that they go about killing them? As for the third option, it was by itself against the commandment of the Torah and their religion. They could not do that too.

After that, all of them reached an agreement that they would lay down their arms before the Holy Prophet ﷺ and be ready to accept whatever he decided about them. Present there were some Anṣārī Ṣaḥābah belonging to the tribe of Aws. They had an age-old pact with Banū Quraizah. So these Ṣaḥābah from the tribe of Aws requested the Holy Prophet ﷺ that these people may be handed over to them. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Would you like me to entrust their case with one of your own chiefs?" When they agreed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "He is your chief, Sa'd Ibn Mu'ādh. I entrust this matter with him for a judgement." Everyone approved of it.

Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn Mu'ādh ؓ was fatally wounded during the battle of Khandaq (the Trench) by an arrow. The Holy Prophet ﷺ had housed him in a tent pegged within the compound of the Masjid so that he could be attended to. According to the order of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the verdict on the prisoners from Banū Quraizah was left up to him. The verdict that he gave was that the warring young from them should be killed and women, children and the aged should be treated as prisoners of war which is well-recognized in Islam. This very verdict was enforced. Soon after this verdict, the wound of Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn Mu'ādh ؓ started bleeding suddenly. Therefrom he died. Allah Ta'ālā answered both prayers made by him - that there would be no attack from the Quraish against the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the future, and that the Banū Quraizah would receive the punishment for their treachery which Allah caused to come upon them precisely through him.

Some of those earmarked for killing were set free because of having embraced Islam. 'Aṭīyyah al-Quraẓī, well-known among the Ṣaḥābah, is one of them. Also among them, there was Zubayr Ibn Bāṭā. His freedom was specially requested from the Holy Prophet ﷺ by the Ṣaḥābī, Sayyidnā Thābit Ibn Qays Ibn Shammās ؓ. The reason was that Zubayr Ibn Bāṭā had done a favour to him during the days of the Jahiliyyah when, in the battle of Bu'āth, Thābit Ibn Qays had fallen a

prisoner in the hands of Zubayr Ibn Bāṭā who had simply cut the locks of his hair on the head and let him go free. He had not killed him.

### **Return of favour and national pride: Two unique models**

After having received the order for the release of Zubayr Ibn Bāṭā, Sayyidnā Thābit Ibn Qays went to him and said, "I have done it to return your favor you had done to me during the battle of Bu'āth." Zubayr Ibn Bāṭā said, "There is no doubt that one gentleman deals with another gentleman just like that. But, please tell me what for would a man whose entire family is no more there like to stay alive?" When Sayyidnā Thābit Ibn Qays heard this, he presented himself before the Holy Prophet ﷺ and submitted that the life and honor of his family and children may also be spared. In his grace, he approved of it. When he informed Zubayr Ibn Bāṭā about it, he took another step forward saying, "O Thābit, now tell me how a man with a family would stay alive if he is left with nothing to support it?" Sayyidnā Thābit Ibn Qays returned to the Holy Prophet ﷺ once again and arranged to have whatever wealth or property he had also given back to him. Up to this point, narrated here was the case of the gentleness and gratitude of a true Muslim as demonstrated by Sayyidnā Thābit Ibn Qays.

Now, we can go to have a look at what happened on the other side. When Zubayr Ibn Bāṭā was fully satisfied after having earned his freedom and the freedom of his family and children as well as his wealth and property, he asked Sayyidnā Thābit Ibn Qays about the chiefs of the Jewish tribes: "What happened to Ibn Abī al-Ḥuqaiq whose face was like a Chinese mirror?" He said that he was killed. Then, he asked, "What became of the Banū Quraizah chiefs, Ka'b Ibn Quraizah and 'Amr Ibn Quraizah?" He told him that they too were killed. Then he asked about another two groups. In response, he was informed that all of them were killed.

Hearing this, Zubayr Ibn Bāṭā said to Sayyidnā Thābit Ibn Qays, "You have returned the favor done to you and you have fulfilled your responsibility as due. But, I am not going to rehabilitate myself on my property after they are no more. Include me among them." He meant that he too should be killed. Sayyidnā Thābit Ibn Qays refused to kill him. After that, it was on his insistence that some other Muslim killed him. (Qurṭubī)

This was the national pride or sense of communal shame demonstrated by a disbeliever, a *kafir* who, even after having been given everything back, did not like to continue living without his companions. Here we have two models of conduct demonstrated by a believer and a disbeliever, a *mu'min* and a *kafir*. Both belong to significant historical record. This victory against Banū Quraizah had taken place in the fifth year of Hijrah towards the end of the month of Dhulqa'dah and the beginning of Dhul-Ḥijjah. (Qurṭubī)

### A special note of caution

That the battle of al-Aḥzāb and Banū Quraizah have been taken up here in a somewhat detailed manner is because of two factors. (1) First of all, the Qur'ān has itself opted to describe it in details spread over two sections. (2) Then, there is another reason for it. These events carry many instructions about different departments of life and they also spell out many clear miracles and lessons. These have been highlighted in the text of the present commentary under bold headings. Once we come to know the whole event, the translation of the meanings of the verses given above under the Arabic text, alongwith the footnotes, would become easier to understand. There are a few things that should, however, be taken note of:

Firstly, mention has been made of extreme hardships faced by Muslims in this battle. One state of the anxiety of believers has been pointed to in the words: تَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ الظُّنُونَا ( and you were thinking about Allah all sorts of thoughts. - 10) These thoughts refer to scruples that emerge in one's heart beyond his control at the time of acute anxiety under which one may feel death as near with no hope of deliverance left, or at other occasions like that. Such non-voluntary apprehensions and scruples are neither contradictory of the perfection of 'Imān (faith) nor that of one's nearness to Allah (*wilāyah*). Nevertheless, they do point out to the extent of the severity of distress and anxiety under which scruples had started creeping into the hearts of even the noble Ṣaḥābah who, otherwise, were virtual mountains of fortitude.

The second state mentioned here is that of the hypocrites for they had started saying that the promises of Allah and His Rasūl were a web of deception: إِذْ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ مَا وَعَدَنَا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ، إِلَّا غُرُورًا (And (remember) when the hypocrites and those having malady in their hearts

were saying, "Allah and His messenger did not promise us but deceitfully; -12). This was an externalized demonstration of their inner disbelief. Onward from here, mention has been made of two groups of hypocrites who were practically a part of the Jihād effort along with Muslims, though outwardly only. One of the two groups started running without any permission saying: *وَإِذْ قَالَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْهُمْ يَا أَهْلَ يَثْرِبَ لَا مُقَامَ لَكُمْ فَارْجِعُوا* (and when a group of them said, "O people of Yathrib (Madinah), there is no place for you to stay; so go back. - 13" And the other group requested the permission of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to go back on the basis of false excuses. Their conduct has been mentioned as: *وَيَسْتَأْذِنُ فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمُ النَّبِيَّ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّ بُيُوتَنَا عَوْرَةٌ* (And a group of them was seeking permission (to leave) from the prophet, saying, "In fact our homes are vulnerable," while they were not vulnerable - 13). Thus, the Qur'ān exposed the hollowness of their excuses as a pack of lies. The truth of the matter was no more than that they intended to run from the battlefield: *إِنْ يُرِيدُونَ إِلَّا فِرَارًا* ( They wanted nothing but to escape - 13). Taken up in the next several verses is their mischief-making and enmity with Muslims following which their sad end has been pointed out.

After that, the text mentions sincere believers and praises their firmness and fortitude. In the same connection, there comes a strong assertion of the need to obey and follow the Holy Prophet ﷺ almost in the form of a legal rule of conduct: *لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ* (There is indeed a good model for you in the Messenger of Allah - 21). From here it stands proved that all sayings and doings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ have to be followed. But, the Shari'ah authorities have explained the rule about the different degrees of following required from a Muslim. The rule is that any act or omission of the Holy Prophet ﷺ proved to have been done as an obligation would have to be obeyed and followed as *wājib* (obligatory, necessary). And any act or omission on his part that is proved to have been done as a preferable conduct (*istiḥbāb*) and not as an obligatory one, should be followed by us too as a commendable (*mustaḥab*) conduct and not as a necessary obligation. This, in other words, means that its contravention will not be declared to be a sin. (For a detailed discussion, see al-Jaṣṣāṣ in *Aḥkām ul-Qur'ān*)

The last three (25-27) of the cited verses refer to the event relating to Banū Qurai'āzah. In verse 26: *وَأَنْزَلَ الَّذِينَ ظَاهَرُوهُمْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مِنْ صَيَاصِيهِمْ* it was said that Allah Ta'ālā had, by putting the awe of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

and his Muslim followers into the hearts of the people of the Book who had helped the Confederate forces, made them come down from their strong fortresses and had thus made Muslims the inheritors of their properties, homes and areas of concentration.

In the last verse (27), good news of future victories has been given. Gone is the time when disbelievers attacked. Now the cycle of Muslim victories will begin and they will come to be on lands their feet have not touched yet. And this prophecy unfolded itself during the tenure of the noble Ṣaḥābah and everyone witnessed the spectacle of great empires ruled by Cyrus and Caesar come under them. And Allah does what He wills.

#### Verses 28 - 34

يَأْتِيهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلٌّ لِّأَزْوَاجِكَ إِن كُنْتَن تَرِدُنَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزَيَّنْتَهَا  
فَتَعَالَيْنَ أُمَتِّعُكَ وَأَسْرِحُكَ سَرَّاحًا جَمِيلًا ﴿٢٨﴾ وَإِن كُنْتَن تَرِدُنَ  
اللَّهِ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالِدَارَ لآخِرَةَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَدَّ لِلْمُحْسِنَاتِ مِنكُنَّ أَجْرًا  
عَظِيمًا ﴿٢٩﴾ يٰنِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ مَن يَأْتِ مِنكُنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبِينَةٍ يُضَعَفْ  
لَهَا الْعَذَابُ ضِعْفَيْنِ ۗ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا ﴿٣٠﴾ وَمَن  
يَّقِنْتَ مِنكُنَّ لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتَعَمَلْ صَالِحًا نُؤْتِيهَا أَجْرَهَا مَرَّتَيْنِ ۗ  
وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهَا رِزْقًا كَرِيمًا ﴿٣١﴾ يٰنِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ لَسْتَن كَأَحَدٍ مِّنَ  
النِّسَاءِ إِنِ اتَّقَيْتَن فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ  
وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوفًا ﴿٣٢﴾ وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُن وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ  
الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَى وَأَقِمْنَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِعْنَ اللَّهَ  
وَرَسُولَهُ ۗ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ  
وَيُطَهِّرَكُم تَطْهِيرًا ﴿٣٣﴾ وَأذْكُرْنَ مَا يُتْلَىٰ فِي بُيُوتِكُن مِّنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ  
وَ الْحِكْمَةِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ لَطِيفًا خَبِيرًا ﴿٣٤﴾

O prophet, say to your wives, "If you intend (to have the pleasure of) worldly life and its charm, then come on, and I shall give you some stuff, and release you in a handsome fashion. [28] and if you intend (to gain the pleasure of) Allah and His messenger and (the betterment of) the Hereafter, then, Allah has prepared a great reward for those of you who do good". [29] O wives of the Prophet, whoever from among you will commit a clearly shameful act, the punishment will be doubled for her. And it is easy for Allah to do so. [30] And whoever of you stays obedient to Allah and His messenger, and acts righteously, We shall give her twice her reward, and We have prepared for her a prestigious provision. [31] O wives of the prophet, you are not like any other women, if you observe *taqwā*. So, do not be too soft in your speech, lest someone having disease in his heart should develop fancies (about you); and do speak with appropriate words. [32] And remain in your homes, and do not display (your) beauty as it used to be displayed in the days of earlier ignorance. And establish *ṣalāh*, and pay *zakāh*, and obey Allah and His messenger. Allah only intends to keep (all sorts of) filth away from you, O members of the family (of the prophet), and to make you pure through a perfect purification. [33] And be mindful of Allah's verses and the wisdom that is recited in your homes. Surely, Allah is All-Kind, All-Aware. [34]

### Commentary

Out of the objectives of this Sūrah, the most important is the stress placed on avoiding everything that may cause pain to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In addition to that, there is a reiteration of instructions to obey him and seek his pleasure. Mentioned in connection with the event of the battle of al-Aḥzāb appearing immediately earlier was the pain caused to the Holy Prophet ﷺ at the hands of the disbelievers and hypocrites. Along with it, also mentioned there was their ultimate disgrace and the victory and success that came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ on every occasion. Also praised there were sincere believers who sacrificed what they had at the instance of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and it was said that they would have high ranks in the Hereafter.

In the verses cited above, the blessed wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ have been particularly taught to be careful that no word or deed that

issues forth from them goes on to cause pain to him. And this is possible only when they devote themselves and become totally obedient to Allah and His Messenger. Some injunctions in this connection have been given by addressing the blessed wives directly.

As for giving the choice of the taking of divorce to the blessed wives in the initial verses, it is limited to one or some incidents that came from the side of the blessed wives. These were contrary to the intent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ which caused pain to him.

One of these incidents is reported from Sayyidnā Jābir ؓ and appears in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim and elsewhere as well. It is said there that the blessed wives got together and asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ that their sustenance allowance should be increased. Abū Ḥayyān explains it in Tafsīr al-Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ by saying that the victories of Banū Naḍīr and Banū Quraizah after the battle of al-Aḥzāb coupled with the distribution of spoils had generated a certain improved economic well-being among common Muslims. At that time, the blessed wives thought the Holy Prophet ﷺ would have also set aside a share for himself in the spoils. Therefore, they appealed to him jointly saying, "*Yā Rasulallah*, these wives of Cyrus and Caesar are laden with all sorts of valuable ornaments and dresses and have maids appointed to serve them while you see how hungry and ill-clad we are. Therefore, some liberal treatment in our case seems to be in order now."

When the Holy Prophet ﷺ heard this demand from the blessed wives that they should be treated at par with the life styles of kings and the worldly-wise rich, he was grieved about how much they had missed to appreciate the worth and value of living in the home of a prophet of Allah. On their part, the blessed wives never thought that their submission would cause pain to him. It was simply because of the well-being of common Muslims around them that they had also thought of the same for themselves. Abū Ḥayyān says that the description of this incident after the battle of al-Aḥzāb also supports the likelihood that this very demand of the wives became the cause of the choice of divorce given to them. According to some Ḥadīth narratives, following the event of having a honey drink while at the home of Sayyidah Zainab ؓ - which will appear in detail later under the commentary on Sūrah At-Taḥrīm, 66:1-5, in Mā'ariful-Qur'ān, Volume VIII - a situation created by the mutual

sense of importance among the blessed wives became the cause of this choice of divorce. If both of these happened close in time to each other, then, it is also not remote to believe that they both could be the cause. But, the words of the Verse of Choice<sup>(1)</sup> are more supportive of the understanding that some financial demand had become its cause - for it was said in this verse: *إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُرَدُّنَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا وَرِزْقَهَا* (If you intend (to have the pleasure of) worldly life and its charm - 28).

This verse gave all blessed wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ the choice to either accept to continue living with him as their husband in the condition he is in (that is, in his straightened economic condition), or become free from him through divorce. If they were to take the first option, they will deserve greater reward and higher ranks in the Hereafter as compared to other women. And if they were to take the second option, that is, taking a divorce, they will not have to face any displeasure as customary with worldly people. In fact, they would be given a send-off with honor, and parting gifts in accordance with Sunnah.

Tirmidhī reports from Umm al-Mu'minīn Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها, "When this verse of choice was revealed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ disclosed it to me before any other wife. Before reciting the verse, he said: I am going to tell you something. But, you do not have to make haste in giving your response. You should rather consult your parents and then respond. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها says, "This was his special favour to me that he prohibited me from expressing my opinion without having consulted my parents first, because he was certain that my parents would never advise me to opt for separation from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. When I heard this verse, I immediately submitted before him, "Do I have to go and consult my parents in this matter? As for me, I choose Allah and His Messenger and the Home of the Hereafter." Then, after me, this command of the Qur'ān was announced to all blessed wives. All of them said what I had said first (that is, none of them elected to have worldly affluence against the honor of being the wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ." (Tirmidhī said: This Ḥadīth is Ḥasan Ṣaḥīḥ).

(1). The 'Verse of Choice' is the title of the verse 29 cited above where the blessed wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ are given a choice either to seek divorce from him or to remain with him, seeking the pleasure of Allah and His Messenger.

### Special Note

Choice of Divorce can be given to a woman in two different forms: (1) That the power of divorce is entrusted with the woman, that is, if she wishes, she can divorce her self and become free. (2) That the power of giving divorce, though, remains in the hands of the husband, yet the husband gives her a promise that when she will wish, he will divorce her. (in the first case, as soon as the wife opts for divorce, she becomes divorced automatically without any act on the part of the husband. But in the latter case, divorce is not effected merely by the woman opting for it unless the husband divorces her.

In the case of the cited verse (28), some commentators are of the view that the choice given to the wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was of the first form, while others have maintained that it was of the second form. The esteemed author of Bayān ul-Qur'ān has commented that the verse has both probabilities. Until one of the two stands determined on the authority of some definitive text, there is no need to determine any form on one's own.'

### Ruling

This verse (28) tells us when there is no congruity between the temperaments of the married couple, the desirable approach is to give the wife the option to live with the husband while being content with whatever state he is in, otherwise, she should be allowed to leave honorably according to Sunnah with divorce and gift of pairs of apparel.

In this case, what can be proved from the cited verse (28) is its desirability only. There is no proof to support its obligation. Some leading Muslim jurists have argued in favour of the obligatory nature of this verse and, on the same basis, they have given the wife of a penniless man, who is incapable of providing living expenses for her, the right to secure a divorce from the court. Full details of this issue have been given in Aḥkām ul-Qur'ān, Part V, under this very verse.<sup>1</sup>

### The particular position of the blessed wives and the rationale of hard restrictions placed on them

يَسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ مَنْ يَأْتِ مِنْكُنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبِينَةٍ يُضَعَفُ لَهَا الْعَذَابُ ضِعْفَيْنِ ط وَكَانَ

(1). This work in Arabic is available from Maktaba-e-Darul-'Uloom, the publishers of the present Tafsīr]

ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا ﴿٣٠﴾ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ مِنْكُمْ لِحًا وَرَسُولِهِ وَتَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا نُؤْتِيهَا أَجْرَهَا مَرَّتَيْنِ ﴿٣١﴾

O wives of the Prophet, whoever from among you will commit a clearly shameful act, the punishment will be doubled for her. And it is easy for Allah to do so. [30] And whoever of you stays obedient to Allah and His messenger, and acts righteously, We shall give her twice her reward, and We have prepared for her a prestigious provision. [31]

From the above verses we notice that the Qur'an mentions therein a particular position of the blessed wives: If they were to commit some sin, they will have to face a punishment which will be twice that of other women. In other words, one sin committed by them will be made to stand for two. Similarly, if they did good deeds, the reward given to them will also be twice that of other women - that is, one good deed done by them will stand for two.

In a way, this verse is a recompense of what the blessed wives did at the time of the revelation of the Verse of Choice whereupon they chose to remain wedded to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and sacrificed whatever material benefits there were in doing otherwise. In return for this, Allah Ta'ālā gave one good deed done by them the status of two. As for the two-fold punishment in the event of some sin from them, that too came to be because of their special superiority and distinctive gentleness and because it stands proved both rationally and textually that Divine punishment for heedlessness and rebellion does increase in proportion to the honor and regard in which one is held.

Certainly great are the blessings of Allah Ta'ālā upon the blessed wives. Allah Ta'ālā chose them to be the wives of His *Rasūl*. The Divine Revelation kept descending in their homes. Under such arrangements, is it not that the least error or shortcoming on their part would be nothing but big? And if, pain is caused to the Holy Prophet ﷺ at the hands of others, then, it would be far more severe in effect that some such occasion of pain or discomfort issues forth from their side. The very words of the Qur'an: *وَأذْكُرَنَّ مَا يُلَى فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ* (And be mindful of Allah's verses and the wisdom that is recited in your homes) appearing in verse 34 point out to this reason.

### Special Note

Looked at in terms of the Muslim community at large, this distinction of the blessed wives - that they receive a two-fold reward of their deed - does not make it necessary that no individual or group is not to be blessed with a two-fold reward for some distinction of theirs. For example, there is the case of those from among the people of the Book who embraced Islam. About them, it was said in the Qur'ān: *أُولَئِكَ يُؤْتَوْنَ أَجْرَهُمْ مَرَّتَيْنِ* (Such people will be given their reward twice - al-Qaṣaṣ, 28:54).

In the blessed letter the Holy Prophet ﷺ wrote to the Byzantine Emperor, it was because of this Qur'ānic statement that he particularly wrote: *يُؤْتِكَ اللَّهُ أَجْرَكَ مَرَّتَيْنِ* (you will be given your reward twice by Allah). As for the clarification of 'giving a reward twice' to the people of the Book who embrace Islam, it is already present in the Qur'ān. Then, there is yet another Ḥadīth where a similar two-fold reward has been mentioned for three persons. Details about it appear in the commentary on Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ under the verse: *يُؤْتَوْنَ أَجْرَهُمْ مَرَّتَيْنِ* (will be given their reward twice - 28:54) in Volume VI of Tafsīr Mā'ariful-Qur'ān.

### The reward for the good deed of an 'Ālim exceeds that of others, and the punishment of his sin too

In Aḥkām ul-Qur'ān, Imām Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ has said: The reason for which Allah Ta'ālā has declared the reward of the good deed of the blessed wives to be two-fold and the punishment of their disobedience also to be two-fold - i.e. their being the special recipients of the prophetic knowledge and Divine revelation--- is also present there in the case of Muslim religious scholars (the '*ulamā*' of *dīn*). Therefore, an 'Ālim (Muslim religious scholar) whose practice is in accord with his '*ilm* (knowledge) will find the reward of that deed of his to be more than others. And if he were to commit some sin, the punishment too will be more than others.

The word: *فَاحِشَةٌ* (*fāḥishah*) appearing in: *بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبِينَةٍ* - 30) is used in the Arabic language for acts of shame as well as for disobedience and sin in an absolute sense. This word has been used in the Qur'ān at many places. In this verse, this word cannot be taken to mean acts of shame because Allah Ta'ālā has kept the wives of all His prophets immune from this serious fault. None of the wives of the blessed prophets has ever committed any act of this nature. The wives of Sayyidnā Lūṭ and

Sayyidnā Nūḥ عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَام deviated from the faith preached by them, rebelled, and were punished for it. But, none of them was ever charged of committing an act of shame. As for the blessed wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, there was absolutely no probability that any such act of immodesty will ever issue forth from them. Therefore, the word: *fāḥishah* in this verse means common sins or the causing of pain and discomfort to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Then the word: مُبَيِّنَةٌ (*mubayyinah*: open, clear, manifest) used here along with فَاحِشَةٌ is an evidence in support, because acts of shamelessness are not '*mubayyinah*' (clear, manifest) anywhere. That takes place secretly. So, the expression: فَاحِشَةٌ مُبَيِّنَةٌ (clearly shameful act) means common sins, or the causing of pain to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Out of the Tafsīr authorities, Muqātil Ibn Sulaimān has declared that the sense of 'shameful act' in this verse is either disobeying the Holy Prophet ﷺ or demanding something from him the fulfillment of which is hard on him. (Reported by al-Baihaqī in As-Sunan)

It will be noticed that the two-fold punishment has been identified by the Qur'ān only with '*clearly shameful act*'. But, for the two-fold reward, it has imposed several restrictions, as in: وَمَنْ يُقِنْتَ لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا (And whoever of you stays obedient to Allah and His messenger, and acts righteously, We shall give her twice her reward-- 31). Here, *qunūt*, that is, staying obedience to Allah and His Messenger is a condition. Then, acting righteously is yet another condition. The reason is that reward comes only when obedience is perfect while, for punishment, even a single sin is enough.

### Special Instructions given to the Blessed Wives

Before we describe these instructions in details as they appear from the next verse: يَا أَيُّهَا النِّسَاءُ النَّبِيِّ لَسْتُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِنِ اتَّقَيْتُنَّ فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ (O wives of the prophet, you are not like any other women, if you observe *taqwā*. So, do not be too soft in your speech ... 32), it will be useful to recollect that, in the previous verses, the blessed wives have been restrained from placing demands before the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the fulfillment of which will be hard on him, or those which may be inappropriate in view of his high prophetic station. And once they have chosen to live in that arrangement, their status was raised higher than other women to the extent that one deed done by them was made to stand for two. Now, in and onwards from verse 32, they have been given some instructions in order to correct and



after all, the wives of the Messenger of Allah. Instead of that, this superiority is based on the condition that they observe Taqwā and obey Divine injunctions. (Qurṭubī and Maḏhari)

After that, some instructions have been given to the blessed wives  
رضى الله عنهن :

### The First Instruction

It relates to restrictions on the modality of voice and speech as part of the rules of *ḥijāb* or *pardah* applicable to women and begins with the words: فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ (so do not be too soft in your speech- 32). It means, even if there be the need to talk to someone who is not a *maḥram* from behind a screen (or something else obstructing the view), even then, while speaking, effort should be made to avoid the delicacy and grace in diction naturally present in the voice of women. The delicacy and grace mentioned here refer to a certain level of softness which might make some inclination rise in the heart of the addressee as stated immediately after: فَيَطْمَعُ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا (lest someone having disease in his heart should develop fancies (about you); and do speak with appropriate words. - 32) The sense is that one should not talk softly in a manner that would cause temptation and tilt in a person who already has some disease in his heart. Disease means hypocrisy, or its offshoots. That a real hypocrite will be so tempted is all too obvious. But, a person who, despite being a sincere believer, inclines towards something unlawful may not be a hypocrite but weak in faith he certainly is. And this weakness in faith which makes one tilt towards the unlawful is really nothing but an offshoot of hypocrisy. With faith being pure and having not the least element of hypocrisy in it, no one can ever tilt towards what is *ḥarām*, unlawful. (Maḏhari)

In essence, the aim of the first instruction is to empower women to achieve the high station of self-protection from non-Maḥram men through personal avoidance and legal *ḥijāb* so that they do not go even near a non-Maḥram weak in faith lest some temptation or tilt creeps into his heart. A detailed discussion of the *ḥijāb* of women will appear within this Sūrah under the verses that follow. Being given at this point is simply an explanation of what has appeared here as part of the special instructions for the blessed wives. So, once the noble mothers of the believers had heard the instruction about speech or address, some of them were so alerted that they, while talking to a non-Maḥram male after the

revelation of this verse, used to put their hand over their mouth so that their voice would change. Therefore, it appears in a Ḥadīth of Sayyidnā ‘Amr Ibn al-‘Ās: *إِنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ نَهَى أَنْ يُكَلِّمَ النِّسَاءَ إِلَّا بِأَذْنِ أَزْوَاجِهِنَّ* (The Holy Prophet ﷺ had prohibited that women talk without the permission of their spouses) (Reported by aṭ-Ṭabarānī with 'good' chain of authority, Maḥzarī)

### Ruling

At least this much stands proved from this verse, and from the Ḥadīth quoted above, that the voice of a woman is not included under *satr*, that is, under what must be concealed. But, a precautionary restriction has been placed here too. Then, consideration has also been given in religious injunctions and acts of worship that women do not talk at a high pitch that could be heard by men. If the Imām makes a mistake, those following him in the congregation are duty-bound to interrupt and correct him verbally. But, women have been taught that, instead of correcting the Imām verbally, they should simply clap by striking one hand over the back of the other so that the Imām is alerted. They have to say nothing verbally.

### The Second Instruction

This concerns the observance of full *ḥijāb* ( *pardah* or veil). It was said: *وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَى* (And remain in your homes, and do not display (your) beauty as it used to be displayed in the days of earlier ignorance - 33). Here, the expression: *الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَى* (the days of earlier ignorance ) means the Jahiliyyah which prevailed in the world before the advent of Islam. Embedded in this expression is the hint that later than it there is to come yet another Jahiliyyah, a period of another ignorance in which a similar display of immodesty and disregard for proper covering of bodies would become rampant. That, probably, is the Jahiliyyah of modern times, something visible everywhere.

In this verse, the essential injunction about *ḥijāb* is that women stay at home (that is, do not go out without the need as admissible in the Sharī‘ah). Along with it, it was also said that they should not go out moving around in public without *ḥijāb*, as it used to be the wont of women in the earlier period of Jāhiliyyah. The word: *تَبَرُّجٌ* (*tabarruj*) essentially means manifestation or display and, at this place, it means the display of personal embellishment before non-Maḥram men - as it appears

in another verse: *عَيْرٌ مُتَبَرِّجَاتٍ بِزِينَةٍ* (not displaying embellishment - An-Nūr, 24:60).

As said earlier, a full discussion of the *ḥijāb* or *pardah* of women and the injunctions related with it will follow within this Sūrah. Our present comments shall remain restricted to the explanation of the cited verse. The verse tells us two things about *ḥijāb*:

(1) For women, the real thing desirable with Allah is that they should not go out of their homes. Their creation is an answer to whatever needs to be done at home. Let them stay involved in it. As for the real *ḥijāb* desirable in the Shari'ah, it is a *ḥijāb* that stands achieved by their staying at home, that is, the home becomes their veil or cover (*حِجَابٌ بِأَيْبُوتٍ*: *al-ḥijāb-bil-buyut*).

(2) The other thing it tells us is: If a woman has to go out of the home to take care of some need, let her not go out with any display of embellishment. Instead, she should wear what covers her whole body, a *burqa'*, or *jilbāb* (women's gown, garment or cloak) - as in the verse of this very Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb: *يُذَنِّبْنَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ* (bring down over themselves part of their outer garments - 33:59), the details about which shall appear later, *insha'Allah Ta'ālā*.

### Occasions of need have been exempted from the obligation of 'staying in homes.'

In the opening sentence of verse 33: *قَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ* (And remain in your homes), staying in homes was made obligatory (*wājib*) which apparently purports that it should be absolutely prohibited and *ḥarām* for a woman to go out of her home, but verse has, at the first place, already indicated through the use of the words: *وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ* (And do not display your beauty) within this verse that going out as needed is not prohibited in an absolute sense. Instead, what is prohibited is going out in a manner which displays embellishment. Then, there is the injunction of: *يُذَنِّبْنَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ* (bring down over themselves part of their outer garments - 33:59) to appear later in Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb. This injunction is itself telling us that to a certain degree women do have the permission to go out of the home, of course on condition that they go out in *ḥijāb* wearing an outer garment like *burqa'* etc.

In addition to that, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has himself clarified that

occasions of need are exempt from this injunction, as in a Ḥadīth where, while addressing the blessed wives, he is reported to have said: *قَدْ أُذِنَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَخْرُجْنَ لِحَاجَتِكُنَّ* (You are permitted to go out for your needs - reported by Muslim). Then, the conduct of the Holy Prophet ﷺ after the revelation of the verse of *ḥijāb* proves that women have the permission to go out of homes on occasions of need, as the going of the blessed wives with the Holy Prophet ﷺ for *Ḥajj* and *‘Umrah* stands confirmed on the authority of sound and authentic Aḥādīth. Similarly, their going with him in many battles stands proved. Then, there are many narrations of Ḥadīth which also prove that the blessed wives رضى الله عنهن used to go out of their homes to visit their parents, did their duty by calling on the sick among relatives and offering condolence on the death of someone among them. And during the blessed time of the Prophet ﷺ, they also had the permission to go to the *Masājid*.

And not only that it happened in the company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ or in his time alone, but even after his passing away, it is a confirmed fact that the all his blessed wives went for *Ḥajj* and *‘Umrah* - with the exception of Sayyidah Saudah رضى الله عنها and Sayyidah Zainab bint Jaḥsh رضى الله عنها etc. No reproach or disapproval (*nakāir*) thereupon has been reported from any of the noble Ṣaḥabah. In fact, Sayyidnā ‘Umar رضى الله عنه sent the blessed wives of the Messenger of Allah for Ḥajj under arrangements specially made for them - he sent Sayyidnā ‘Uthmān al-Ghanī رضى الله عنه and Sayyidnā ‘Abd ur-Raḥmān Ibn al-‘Awf رضى الله عنه with them to supervise and manage their pilgrimage. And as for the incidence of Ummul-Mu‘minīn Sayyidah Saudah and Sayyidah Zainab bint Jaḥsh رضى الله عنهما not going for Ḥajj and *‘Umrah* after the passing away of the noble Prophet ﷺ, it was not on the basis of this verse, instead, it was on the basis of a Ḥadīth. That is, when on the occasion of the Last Ḥajj (*Hajjatul-Wadaā*), the Holy Prophet ﷺ helped his blessed wives perform their Ḥajj with him personally, the remark that he made on return was: *هَذِهِ ثُمَّ لَزُومِ الْحُصْرِ* (This is it. After that, should stick to the mats at home). The first word: *هَذِهِ* (*hādhihī*: translated here as 'this is it') refers to this very Ḥajj and *حُصْر* (*ḥuṣur*) is the plural form of *حَصِير* (*ḥaṣīr*) which means a mat (of straw, a modest version of other floor spreads such as rug, carpet, *daree* etc.). In essence, the Ḥadīth is saying: Your going out for this alone is done. After that, you stick to the mats of your homes necessarily

without having to part therefrom. Sayyidah Saudah bint Zam‘ah رضى الله عنها and Sayyidah Zainab bint Jaḥsh رضى الله عنها took this Ḥadīth to mean: 'Your going out was permissible for this very Last Ḥajj. Beyond that, it is not.' The other blessed wives - including a jurist of the class of Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضى الله عنها - unanimously interpreted these words of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to mean that 'your going out of your homes is permissible for this kind of journey which aims at performing a recognized act of worship, otherwise you should stay at home' In gist, from the sense of the verse: وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ (And remain in your homes - 33) - as supported by the indicators of the Qur‘ān, the practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the consensus of the noble Ṣaḥābah - occasions of need are exempted which include religious obligations of Ḥajj and ‘Umrah, taking care of the natural duties towards parents, visiting Maḥram relatives in health and sickness and attending to other requirements of this nature. Similarly, if a woman has no arrangement for her living expenses, then, it is also permissible for her to go out in *ḥijāb* in order to earn an honorable living. However, going out on occasions of need is subject to the condition that one does not go out to display personal embellishment. Instead, one should go out properly covered with *burqa‘* or *jilbāb* (full mantle or *chadar*).

### **The offensive lapses of the Rawāfiḍ about the journey of Ummul-Mu‘minin Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضى الله عنها to Baṣrah and the event of the battle of Jamal:**

It has been made amply clear in the previous paragraph that the sense of the imperative of وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ 'remain in your homes' (33) as proved from the very indicators, rather, expressions of the Qur‘ān, as well as from the practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and after him from the consensus of the noble Ṣaḥābah, it is confirmed that occasions of need are exempt from it - which includes going for religious needs of Ḥajj and ‘Umrah etc. Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah along with Sayyidah Umm Salamah and Sayyidah Ṣafīyyah, may Allah be pleased with all of them, had gone for Ḥajj. There they heard about the martyrdom of Sayyidnā ‘Uthmān رضى الله عنه and about the incidents of rebellion against him. They were intensely grieved. The apprehension of an ill-omened disorder counter to unity among Muslims was weighing heavy on their minds. Under these circumstances, Sayyidnā Ṭalḥah, Zubair, Nu‘mān Ibn Bashīr, Ka‘b Ibn

'Ujrah and some other noble Ṣaḥābah escaped from Madīnah and reached Makkah al-Mu'azzamah because the killers of Sayyidnā 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه wanted to kill them too. These people were not with the rebels. In fact, they had tried to dissuade them from acting in that manner. So, as they were after them as well, these people saved their lives by escaping to Makkah al-Mu'azzamah. Once there, they presented themselves before Ummul-Mu'minīn Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها and sought her good counsel. She advised them not to go to Madīnah until such time the rebels are gathered around Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه and he is exercising restraint against taking Qiṣāṣ (retaliation) from them, lest the situation is aggravated further. In this situation, they should go to live for a few days at a place where they find themselves safe and the Amīr al-Mu'minīn succeeds in controlling the law and order situation in Madīnah. As for making whatever efforts they can, the best they can do is to try that these people converged around the Amīr al-Mu'minīn get scattered and he is enabled to exercise his authority to exact Qiṣāṣ (retaliation) or revenge from them.

To this, they agreed and thought of leaving for Baṣrah because at that time Muslim forces were converged there. Once their plan to go was firm, they also requested Ummul-Mu'minīn Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها to stay at Baṣrah along with them until such time that the government resumes its normal function.

And the fact of the power and dominance of the killers of Sayyidnā 'Uthmān, as well as of the leaders of disorder, and the lack of Sayyidnā 'Alī's power to enforce the Islamic legal punishment against them is something clearly proven from the report of Nahjul-Balāghah itself.<sup>(1)</sup> It should be borne in mind that Nahjul-Balāghah is regarded to be authentic by Shiites. It appears in Nahjul-Balāghah: "To the noble Amīr (Amīr al-Mu'minīn Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه), some of his companions and colleagues themselves said: If you punish the people who attacked 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه, it will be better. Thereupon, the noble Amīr said: My brother, I am not unaware of this thing you are talking about. But, how can this be done when these very people are there all over Madīnah - and your slaves and the Bedouins of the adjoining areas have also joined

(1) Nahjul-Balāghah is a compilation of the lectures of Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه held by the Shiites as authentic.

them. If, under these circumstances, I were to issue the orders for their punishment, how would these be implemented?

On one side, Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضى الله عنها realized the helplessness of Sayyidnā ‘Alī ؑ in this matter while, on the other, she also knew that the hearts of Muslims were wounded in the face of the *shahadah* of Sayyidnā ‘Uthmān ؑ. Moreover, the delay in taking the due revenge from his killers on the part of Sayyidnā ‘Alī ؑ was being watched as his helplessness while the killers of Sayyidnā ‘Uthmān also used to participate in the meetings of the Amīr al-Mu’minīn. People who were not aware of his helplessness had found their reason for complaint against him as well. It was possible that this kind of complaint may trigger some other trial. Therefore, it was to exhort people to observe patience, to strengthen the hands of Amīr al-Mu’minīn for the purpose of stabilizing the rule of law in the state, to remove mutual complaints and to achieve the objective of making things work better among people that Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضى الله عنها decided to embark on the journey to Baṣrah. In this journey, her Maḥram nephew, Sayyidnā ‘Abdullah Ibn Zubair ؑ and others were with her. She had herself stated the purpose of this journey before Sayyidnā Qa’qā’ ؑ as it would appear later. And it is also obvious that the mission of conciliation and betterment among believers at the time of such a terrible trial was really a significant religious service. If, for this purpose, the Ummul-Mu’minīn took to the journey of Baṣrah while accompanied by her Maḥrams and seated in a metal-framed camel litter, why would the Shiites and Rawāfiḍ raise such a dust storm about it and say that the Ummul-Mu’minīn contravened the injunctions of the Qur’ān? What justification is there for it?

Later on the war-like situation, created by the mischief of the hypocrites and the agent provocateurs of disorder, was something even the thought of which had never crossed the mind of Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضى الله عنها. For the explanation of this verse, this much is enough. Onwards from here, this is not the occasion for going into the details of the event of the battle of *Jamal*. But, in order to make the reality clear in brief, a few lines follow.

Circumstances that one confronts in this world at the time of mutual discord simply cannot be neglected by people of insight and experience. The same circumstances developed here too when the journey of Baṣrah

undertaken by Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضى الله عنها in the company of the noble Ṣaḥābah who had come from Madīnah was reported before Sayyidnā ‘Alī رضى الله عنه in a totally deformed manner by the hypocrites and the manipulators of disorder. The version they gave to him was that all those people were going to Baṣrah to join up with forces stationed there and from where they would come out to confront him. If he was the Amīr of the time, they instigated, it was his duty to preempt this threat and stop them by going to where they were, lest the danger increases any further. There were noble Ṣaḥābah of the stature of Sayyidnā Ḥasan and Ḥusain, ‘Abdullāh Ibn Ja’far and ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās رضى الله عنهم اجمعين who even differed with this line of action. The advice they gave was that he should not throw his forces against them until such time that he had the correct assessment of the prevailing situation before him. But, the majority present there was of those who had tendered the first option. Sayyidnā ‘Alī رضى الله عنه, also tilting towards the same option, came out with the armed forces, and along with him, came these wicked votaries of disorder and rebellion.

When these gentlemen reached the environs of Baṣrah, they sent Sayyidnā Qa’qā’ رضى الله عنه to Ummul-Mu’minīn Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضى الله عنها to find out the circumstances of her visit. They asked her, ‘O Mother of the Believers, what was the reason that brought you here?’ Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah said, *أى بنى الإصلاح بين الناس* (My dear son, [I am here to seek nothing but] the betterment of relations between people). Then, she also called Sayyidnā Ṭalḥah and Sayyidnā Zubair رضى الله عنهما in this meeting with Sayyidnā Qa’qā’ رضى الله عنه. He asked them, ‘What do you want?’ They submitted, ‘We want nothing but that the Islamic legal punishment be enforced against the killers of ‘Uthmān رضى الله عنه.’ In response, Sayyidnā Qa’qā’ رضى الله عنه explained by saying, ‘This thing cannot be done until Muslim forces are organized and firmly established. Therefore, at this time, it is necessary that you take to a stance of conciliation.’

These blessed souls submitted to the advice. Sayyidnā Qa’qā’ رضى الله عنه went to Sayyidnā ‘Alī رضى الله عنه and told him about it. He too was very pleased, and satisfied. Everyone decided to go back. For three days, they stayed on the camping grounds in a state that no one had any doubt about the forthcoming declaration of truce between the two parties. And, on the fourth day, this announcement was going to be made and a meeting

between Sayyidnā 'Alī عليه السلام and Sayyidnā Ṭalḥah and Zubair عليه السلام was due to take place - in which these killers of Sayyidnā 'Uthmān عليه السلام were not included. This thing was too hard for them to take. They made a plan. They told their colleagues, 'First you go into the group around Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah and unleash a spate of killing and pillage so that she and her compatriots think that the pledge was broken from the side of Sayyidnā 'Alī, as a result of which, becoming victims of this misunderstanding, they would hurl themselves against the armed forces of Sayyidnā 'Alī.' This satanic device engineered by them worked. So, when the attack on the group accompanying Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها came from the side of the agents of disorder who had infiltrated the forces of Sayyidnā 'Alī عليه السلام, they were excusable in taking this attack to have come from the forces of the Amīr al-Mu'minīn - and thus began their counter action in defence. When Sayyidnā 'Alī عليه السلام saw this state of affairs, he had no option left but to fight. And the unintended mishap of mutual infighting that was to occur did occur. **إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ**. It is exactly like this that this event has been reported by at-Ṭabarī and other reliable historians from the narrations of Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn Ja'far, Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbās and others رضي الله عنهم اجمعين. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

In short, as a result of the wickedness of the agent provocateurs of disorder, this event of fighting between two revered groups came to pass unconsciously. And when this *fitnah* subsided, these very two revered personalities were the ones who were intensely grieved over it. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها, when recalled this event, would weep so much that her scarf became all wet with her tears. Similarly, Sayyidnā 'Alī عليه السلام was also terribly shocked over this event. When, after the *fitnah* had subsided, he went to see the dead bodies of those killed, he beat his thighs with his hands and said, 'Would that, much before this happened, I were dead, forgotten, lost!'

And according to some narrations, when Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها would recite the verse: **وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ** ( And stay in your homes - 33) in the Holy Qur'ān, she used to break into tears until her scarf would be all wet with tears. (Reported by 'Abdullāh Ibn Aḥmad in Zawā'iduz-Zuhd and Ibn ul-Mundhir and Ibn Abī Shaibah from Masrūq, Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

That she wept on the recital of the cited verse was neither because the contravention of the command of 'staying in homes' was a sin in her sight

nor because the journey was prohibited. Instead of all that, the serious and unwelcome event that came to pass was the cause of her natural grief. (All these narrations and the subject matter have been taken from Tafsīr Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

### The third, fourth and fifth instruction of the Qur'ān to the blessed wives

Two instructions have appeared in detail earlier. They related to the avoidance of addressing non-Maḥram men softly and tenderly and of going out of homes unnecessarily. Now, the other three instructions are contained in the next sentence of verse 33: وَأَقِمْنَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِعْنَ اللَّهَ وَأَطِعْنَ رَسُولَهُ (and establish Ṣalāh, and pay Zakāh, and obey Allah and His Messenger). These are a total of five instructions. For women, these are matters of great consequences.

### These five instructions apply to all Muslims universally

At least in the case of the later instructions mentioned above, no one can presume that they could be special to the blessed wives. These are Ṣalāh, Zakāh and Obedience to Allah and His Messenger. How can any Muslim anywhere be taken as exempted from these? As for the first two instructions which relate to the *ḥijāb* or *pardah* of women, a little deliberation would make it clear that they too are not special to the blessed wives. In fact, the same injunction applies to all Muslim women. The only question that has to be answered is that the Holy Qur'ān has said before these instructions: لَسْتُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ إِنِ اتَّقَيْتُنَّ (32) that is, the blessed wives are not like common women, if they take to Taqwā. This sentence apparently indicates to the speciality of the blessed wives. A clear answer to this doubt is that the speciality seen here does not mean that these injunctions are restricted to them, instead, it revolves round the care and concern to be observed in acting in accordance with them. In other words, it means that the blessed wives are not like common women, because the state of their dignity is the highest of all. Therefore, they should show the highest care and concern for following the injunctions made obligatory for all Muslim women. And Allah *subhanahu wa Ta'ālā* knows best.

We now move to the last sentence of verse 33 which says: إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا (Allah only intends to keep (all sorts of) filth away from you, O members of the family (of the prophet), and to

make you pure through a perfect purification. - 33). In the verses previous to this, the instructions given to the blessed wives by addressing them directly were, though, not special to them in person, rather, the entire Muslim community is obligated with these injunctions, yet the blessed wives were addressed particularly for the reason that they, in consonance with their dignity and the sanctity of the home of the Prophet, would be showing added care and concern for deeds that match their two singularities. Given in this verse is the wisdom of this particular address, that is, by the special instruction of the betterment of deeds, Allah intends to bless the household of the Messenger of Allah with an ideal state of purity by removing everything counter to it.

The word: الرَّجَسِ (*ar-rijs*) has been used in the Qur'ān for several meanings. At one place, *ar-rijs* has appeared in the sense of idols: فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ (So refrain from the filth of idols - 22:30) and on other occasions, it is used in the sense of sin in absolute terms and at times it is employed to carry the meaning of punishment or impurity or filth. The outcome is that everything which is legally or naturally (or rationally) considered detestable is *ar-rijs*. In the present verse, the word: الرَّجَسِ (*ar-rijs*) appears in this very general sense. (Al-Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ)

### What does "أَهْلُ بَيْتٍ : *Ahl al-Bayt*: People of the House" signify in this verse?

In verses appearing earlier in the present sequence, the address was to the blessed wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, therefore, the form used was in the feminine gender. Here, the expression: أَهْلُ الْبَيْتِ (*ahl al-bayt*) includes, along with the blessed wives, their children and fathers as well, therefore, the form used was in the masculine gender, that is: عَنْكُمْ (from you) and: وَيُطَهِّرْكُمْ (purifies you). And some Tafsīr authorities take '*ahl al-bayt*' to mean the blessed wives only. 'Ikrimah and Muqātil have said exactly this. And Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr رحمه الله has reported the same narration from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رحمه الله saying that he has declared '*ahl al-bayt*' in this verse to mean the blessed wives and then cited the next verse: وَادْكُرْنَ مَا يُتْلَى فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ (and remember what is recited in your homes. -34) as proof (because the address here is to the blessed wives only, as is evident from the feminine gender used in the verse and from the reference to their homes.) [reported by Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Ibn Jarīr]. And the words of the address: نِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ ( O women [wives] of the prophet) in the

immediately previous verses are also its contextual evidence. Early commentator 'Ikrimah ... used to go about proclaiming in the bazaars that '*ahl al-bayt*' in the verse means the blessed wives, because this verse has been revealed to highlight their dignified status and he used to say that he was ready to enter into a *mubāhalah*\* (imprecation) on it.

But, several narrations of Ḥadīth reported by Ibn Katār at this place bear witness that Sayyidah Fāṭimah, Sayyidnā 'Alī and Sayyidnā Ḥasan and Ḥusain رضى الله عنهم اجمعين are also included in '*ahl al-bayt*' - as in a Ḥadīth of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim where Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها narrates: Once the Holy Prophet ﷺ went out of the house with a black sheet from Byzantine wrapped around his blessed body. When Ḥasan Ibn 'Alī ﷺ came out, he took him inside the sheet. Then Sayyidnā Ḥusain ﷺ came. He took him too inside the sheet in the same manner. After that, came Sayyidah Fāṭimah رضى الله عنها and then Sayyidnā 'Alī al-Murtaḍā ﷺ. He also made them come inside the sheet. Thereafter, he recited the verse: *إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا* (Allah only intends to keep (all sorts of) filth away from you, O members of the family (of the prophet-33). And it also appears in some narrations that, after having recited the verse, he said: *اللَّهُمَّ هَؤُلَاءِ أَهْلُ بَيْتِي* (O Allah, these are members of my family) (reported by Ibn Jarīr)

After having reported several reliable *aḥādīth* on this subject, Ibn Kathīr has said: In reality, there is no contradiction in the two sayings reported from Tafsīr authorities. Those who said that this verse was revealed in relation to the high station of the blessed wives and '*ahl al-bayt*' means them does not go contrary to the possible inclusion of other people too under the purview of '*ahl al-bayt*.' Therefore, the sound position is that under the words: '*ahl al-bayt*', the blessed wives are included in any case, because they themselves are the cause of the revelation of this verse. And the inclusion of the direct addressees of the revelation cannot be subjected to any doubt. And Sayyidah Fāṭimah and 'Alī and Ḥasan and Ḥusain رضى الله عنهم اجمعين too - in accordance with the saying of the noble Prophet - are included in '*ahl al-bayt*.' And at both places in this verse, before and after it, the address is to the wives of the prophet using the form of feminine gender. In previous verses, beginning

\* A form of resolving religious disputes through bi-partite invocation. For details, please see Ma'ariful-Qur'ān, Volume II, pp. 90, 91.

from: فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ (So, do not be soft with your address - 32) up to the end all forms employed are feminine. Then, later on in: وَادْكُرْنَ مَا يُتْلَى (and remember what is recited - 34) the form used in the address is in the feminine gender once again. Now, when the text departs from the context in this verse (33) in between and elects to employ the form of masculine gender as in: عَنْكُمْ ('ankum) and: يُطَهِّرْكُمْ (yutaḥhirakum), it also becomes a strong evidence of the fact that included here are not only the wives, but some men as well.

As for what has been said in the verse under study: لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا (Allah only intends to keep (all sorts of) filth away from you, O members of the family (of the prophet-33), it obviously means that, through these instructions, Allah Ta'ālā will keep the 'ahl al-bayt' protected against satanic instigations, sins and evils and cleanse them pure. In short, what is meant here is legal تشریعی (tashrī'ī) purification - not the creational تکوینی (takwīnī) purification which is the hallmark of prophets. It does not become necessary thereby that they all be مَعْصُومٌ 'ma'ṣūm' (infallible) and the commission of any sin by them should not be possible as is the case with the noble prophets, may peace be upon them all - which is the distinctive feature of creational purification. The people of Shiite persuasion have, by differing from the majority of the Muslim community, first of all claimed that the expression: 'ahl al-bayt' is restricted to the progeny and male relatives of the Messenger and that his blessed wives are excluded from it. Then, they went on to declare the word: تَطْهِيرٌ (taḥīr: purification) in the cited verse (34) as standing for their عِصْمَةٌ ('iṣmah: the state of being protected, infallible) and thus made the 'ahl al-bayt' أَهْلُ الْبَيْتِ (ma'ṣūm: infallible) like prophets. This humble writer has given an answer to this approach and has taken up the subject in full details in his Aḥkām ul-Qur'ān under Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb. This work defines عِصْمَةٌ: 'ismah, and proves that it is restricted to prophets and angels and that no one is مَعْصُومٌ (ma'ṣūm) other than them---all this on the basis of Islamic legal arguments and proofs. People of knowledge may see it at their discretion. Others just do not need it.

The word: آيَاتِ اللَّهِ (ayātillāh) in verse 34: وَادْكُرْنَ مَا يُتْلَى فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ (And be mindful of Allah's verses and the wisdom that is recited in your homes) means the Qur'ān and: حِكْمَةٌ (ḥikmah) means the teachings and the sunnah of the noble Messenger of Allah - as the commentators at

large have explained حِكْمَةٌ : *ḥikmah* at this place to mean *sunnah*. And the word: اذْكُرْنَ (*udhkurna*) could have two meanings: (1) To personally remember and be mindful of these verses and the points of wisdom, which should result in acting according to them. (2) To mention and pass on to other members of the Muslim community whatever of the Qur'ān was revealed in their homes before them as well as the teachings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ of which they were the recipients.

### Special Note

In his *Aḥkām ul-Qur'ān*, Ibn al-'Arabī has said: From this verse it stands proved that a person who hears a verse of the Qur'ān, or a statement of Ḥadīth, is duty-bound to convey it to the Muslim *ummah*, so much so that even the blessed wives were bound with the duty of conveying to members of the Muslim community whatever verses of the Qur'ān are revealed in their homes or the teachings that they receive from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Both were a matter of trust placed by Allah in their hands which they had to pass on to others.

### The Protection of Qur'an and Ḥadīth

The way the spreading of the message of the verses of the Qur'ān and the making of arrangements to teach it have been made necessary for the Muslim community, it is in the same way that, by calling it *ḥikmah*, the spreading and teaching of the *aḥādīth* of the Holy Prophet have also been made necessary (in the degree of incumbency). Therefore, the noble Ṣaḥābah, may Allah be pleased with them all, have obeyed and implemented this injunction under all circumstances. There is this incident related to the Sayyidnā Mu'adh ﷺ in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī. He heard a Ḥadīth from the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but he did not narrate it publicly for the reason that he feared that people may not give it the status it deserved or may succumb to some misunderstanding. However, when came the time of his death, he assembled people around him and narrated the Ḥadīth before them and said, 'Up to this time, I had not mentioned it before anyone because of religious expediency. But, now the time of death is near, therefore, I consider it necessary to deliver this thing held in trust back to the Muslim *ummah*, its real owner.' The words of the statement in the Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī are: فَأَخْبَرَ بِهِ مَعَاذَ عِنْدَ مَوْتِهِ تَأْتِمًا that is, 'Sayyidnā Mu'adh ﷺ made people hear this Ḥadīth at the time of his death lest he becomes a sinner by not having conveyed the Ḥadīth of the

Rasūl of Allah to the Muslim *ummah*.'

This incident too is an apt testimony to the fact that all Ṣaḥābah considered the implementation of this injunction of the Qur'ān to be obligatory, and necessary. And since the noble Ṣaḥābah had demonstrated the highest care and concern in conveying Ḥadīth to people with utmost precaution, the protection of Ḥadīth too came, in a certain degree, fairly close to that of the Qur'ān. Picking doubts in this matter really amounts to picking doubts in the Qur'ān. Allah knows best.

### Verse 35

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ  
وَالْقَانِتَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَشِيعِينَ  
وَالْخَشِيعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّائِمِينَ وَالصَّائِمَاتِ  
وَالْحَافِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ  
أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٣٥﴾

Surely, Muslim men and Muslim women, believing men and believing women, devout men and devout women, truthful men and truthful women, patient men and patient women, humble men and humble women, and the men who give sadaqah (charity) and the women who give sadaqah, and the men who fast and the women who fast, and the men who guard their private parts (against evil acts) and the women who guard (theirs), and the men who remember Allah much and the women who remember (Him) --- for them, Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward. [35]

### Commentary

The Qur'ānic addresses in masculine gender normally include women : The Wisdom behind it

In the usual injunctions of the noble Qur'ān, though, both men and women have been included as addressees, but generally the address is made to men. Women are included there as a corollary. Everywhere, by using the words: يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا (O those who have believed) women have been addressed as being included and contained therein. This releases a

hint suggesting that all matters relating to women are shielded, concealed and curtained. In this, there is honor and esteem for them. Particularly, if we were to ponder over the entire Qur'ān, we shall discover that no woman except Sayyidah Maryam bint 'Imran has been referred to by her personal name. Instead, when comes the occasion to mention them, they have been mentioned under the cover of their attribution to men, such as, *إمْرَأَةٌ فِرْعَوْنَ* (the woman or wife of the Pharaoh), *إمْرَأَةٌ نُوحٍ* (the wife of Nūḥ) and *إمْرَأَةٌ لُوطٍ* (the wife of Lūṭ). The exception of Sayyidah Maryam may perhaps be for the reason that Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام could have not been attributed to any father, therefore, the attribution had to be to the mother. So, it was for this attribution that her name was disclosed. And it is Allah who knows best.

Though, this style of the Qur'ān was rooted in great wisdom and expediency, yet it was natural that women should have a feeling of some sort of discomfort about it. Therefore, there are several narrations in Ḥadīth in which women have been reported to have said to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, "We see that Allah Ta'ālā mentions only men everywhere in the Qur'ān and it is them alone that He addresses. This tells us that women have almost no good in them. We are scared about our acts of 'Ibadah. May be, even that is not accepted from us (reported by al-Baghawī from the blessed wives). Similar submissions of this nature from Sayyidah Umm 'Umārah al-Anṣāriyyah appear in Tirmidhī with the authority rating of *ḥasan* (good) and from Sayyidah Asmā' bint 'Umays رضي الله عنها in some other narrations. And in all these narrations, this very submission has been identified as the cause of the revelation of the verse cited above.

In these verses special mention has been made of the acceptability of their deeds to mollify the hearts of women. Here, it has been made very clear that the touchstone of acceptance and appreciation with Allah Ta'ālā is the righteousness of deeds and the spirit of obedience to Him. In this, there is no discrimination between man and woman.

### **The Injunction of Making the Dhikr of Allah Abundantly and Its Wisdom**

Islam stands on five acts of 'Ibādah or worship - Ṣalāh, Zakāh, Ṣiyām (fasting), Ḥajj and Jihād. But, there is just no injunction in the entire Qur'ān that commands any act of 'Ibadah from out of these to be done

abundantly. However, the doing of the Dhikr (remembrance) of Allah (by heart or tongue) abundantly has been ordered in several verses of the Holy Qur'an as in Sūrah Al-Anfal (8:45) and Sūrah Al-Jumu'ah (62:10) while in the present verse of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb it was said: **وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ** (and the men remembering Allah much and the remembering women - 35).

What is the wisdom behind it? To begin with, it can be said that the Dhikr of Allah is the essential spirit of all acts of worship as it appears in a narration of Sayyidnā Mu'adh Ibn Anas رضي الله عنه. Someone asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ, "Who from among the Mujahidin deserves the best of returns?" He said, "One who makes the Dhikr of Allah most abundantly." It was asked again, "Who from among the fasting is most reward-worthy?" He said, "One who makes the Dhikr of Allah most abundantly." Then, similar questions were asked about Ṣalāh, Zakāh, Ḥajj and Ṣadaqah. Every time he said: 'One who makes the Dhikr of Allah most abundantly,' that is, he or she is more deserving of the reward (reported by Ahmad, from Ibn Kathir)

Secondly, it is the easiest of all acts of 'Ibadah. The Shari'ah too has placed no condition for it. Be it with *wuḍū'* or without, be it lying, sitting, or walking, the Dhikr of Allah can be done at all times. It demands no hard labor from anyone nor does it require any formal free time. Yet, so great is the effect and benefit of the Dhikr of Allah that, through it, even worldly chores transform into worship and religious acts. The prayers that are made before and after eating, on going out and on coming back, before travel, in travel and on returning home, and before and after starting a business have all been taught to us by the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The outcome of this enormous treasure of prophetic prayers is that no Muslim should do anything at any time while he or she may be heedless toward or negligent of Allah. And should one make it a point to recite these prayers as part of what he or she has to do in life and its work, then, *dunyā* becomes *dīn*, i.e. worldly duties start releasing the fragrance of faith, a wonderful experience indeed.

### Verses 36 - 39

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا لِمُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ

لَهُمُ الْخَيْرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ، فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا  
 مُبِينًا ﴿٣٦﴾ وَإِذْ تَقُولُ لِلَّذِي أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْسِكْ  
 عَلَيْكَ زَوْجَكَ وَاتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَتُخْفِي فِي نَفْسِكَ مَا اللَّهُ مُبْدِيهِ وَتَخْشَى  
 النَّاسَ وَاللَّهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَخْشَاهُ ۗ فَلَمَّا قَضَى زَيْدٌ مِنْهَا وَطَرًا زَوَّجْنَاكَهَا  
 لِكَيْ لَا يَكُونَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ حَرَجٌ فِي أَزْوَاجِ أَدْعِيَائِهِمْ إِذَا قَضَوْا  
 مِنْهُنَّ وَطَرًا ۗ وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ مَفْعُولًا ﴿٣٧﴾ مَا كَانَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ مِنْ  
 حَرَجٍ فِيمَا فَرَضَ اللَّهُ لَهُ، سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ فِي الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ ۗ وَكَانَ  
 أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قَدَرًا مَقْدُورًا ﴿٣٨﴾ الَّذِينَ يُبَلِّغُونَ رِسَالَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَخْشَوْنَهُ  
 وَلَا يَخْشَوْنَ أَحَدًا إِلَّا اللَّهَ ۗ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ حَسِيبًا ﴿٣٩﴾

And it is not open for a believing man or a believing woman -- once Allah and His messenger have decided a thing -- that they should have a choice about their matter. And whoever disobeys Allah and His messenger, he indeed gets off the track, falling into an open error. [36] And (remember) when you were saying to the one who was favored by Allah and favored by you, "Keep your wife to your self, and fear Allah." And you were concealing in your heart what Allah was going to reveal. and you were fearing people, while Allah is more entitled to be feared by you. So, when Zaid finished his desire for her, We gave her into your marriage, so that there may not be a problem for the believers in marrying wives of their adopted sons, when they finish their desire for them. And Allah's decree had to be enforced. [37] There is no problem for the prophet in (doing) what Allah has prescribed for him, a customary practice of Allah in the case of those who have gone before--- And Allah's command is pre-determined by destiny---. [38] those who convey the messages of Allah and have awe of Him and have no awe of anyone except Allah. And Allah is sufficient to take account (of everyone). [39]

### Commentary

It has been repeatedly explained earlier that the majority of

injunctions appearing in Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb relate to the reverence, love and perfect obedience of the Holy Prophet ﷺ or to the prohibition of causing any pain to him. The verses cited above have also been revealed in connection with some incidents of this nature.

One such incident related to Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn Ḥārithah who was the slave of someone. It was during the days of Jāhiliyyah that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had bought him from the famous bazaar of 'Ūkāz. He was still very young at that time. The Holy Prophet ﷺ had freed him after purchasing him, and further honored him by adopting him as his son as was the common practice under the Arab custom of the time and went on to bring him up. In Makkah al-Mukarramah, he was called by the name of Zayd Ibn Muḥammad ﷺ. The Qur'ān declared it to be an erroneous custom of the Jāhiliyyah and prohibited the calling of the so-called or adopted son of a person as his 'son' and ordered that he should be attributed to his real father. Revealed in this connection were verses that have appeared earlier within this Sūrah: اُدْعُوهُمْ لِأَبَائِهِمْ (Call them by (the name of) their (real) fathers - 5) After the revelation of these injunctions, the noble Ṣaḥābah abandoned the practice of calling him by the name of Zayd Ibn Muḥammad ﷺ and started attributing him to his father, Ḥārithah.

### A subtle point

Not even the name of the greatest of the great Ṣaḥābī - of course, except that of the blessed prophets - was ever mentioned throughout the Qur'ān with the sole exception of Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn Ḥārithah! Some respected elders while describing the wisdom behind it have said that the attribution of his parentage to the Holy Prophet ﷺ when severed under the injunction of the Qur'ān had him deprived of a great personal honor. However, Allah Ta'ālā had it compensated by mentioning him in the Qur'ān by name. Thus, the word: زَيْد (Zayd), being a word of the Qur'ān, has its own distinct status. On every letter of this word, in accordance with the promise in Ḥadīth, ten good deeds are recorded in the Book of Deeds. So, when his name is recited in the Qur'ān, the reciter gets thirty good deeds in return just for pronouncing his name!

Even the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to give him respect. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها says, 'Whenever he has sent him on a military expedition, it is invariably him that he has made the commander of the forces.' (Ibn Kathīr)

### A lesson to remember

This, in a nutshell, was the reality of slavery at the advent of Islam when slaves were educated and trained till they became achievers and whoever from them proved his class and capability was given the rank of leaders.

When Zayd Ibn Ḥārithah grew to be a young man, the Holy Prophet ﷺ chose Sayyidah Zainab bint Jaḥsh, the daughter of his paternal aunt for marriage with him. A formal proposal of marriage was sent. Since Sayyidnā Zayd was branded with the conventional label of being a freed slave, Sayyidah Zainab and her brother, ‘Abdullah Ibn Jaḥsh rejected this proposal on the basis that they were nobler than him in terms of family and lineage.

Revealed upon this incident was the verse: مَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ (And it is not open for a believing man or a believing woman - 36). The instruction given there is: When the Holy Prophet ﷺ orders someone to do something as an obligation, it becomes obligatory for that person to do it. The choice of not doing it does not remain valid under Islamic Law - even if the required act may not be obligatory or necessary in its origin. But, once he does order someone to do that, it become incumbent and obligatory on him. And should someone not do so, his or her action has been termed as open error at the end of the verse.

When Sayyidah Zainab bint Jaḥsh and her brother heard this verse, they retracted from their rejection and agreed to the proposal of marriage. Thus, the marriage was solemnized. The dower of the bride was paid by the Holy Prophet ﷺ on behalf of Sayyidnā Zayd which was ten *dīnārs* [equal to approximately 4 *tolas* of gold), sixty *dirhams* (equal to approximately 18 1/2 *tolas* of silver), one beast of burden, complete pair of ladies dress, 15 *mudd* (approximately 25 kilos) of flour and 10 *mudd* (approximately 5 kilos) of dates (Ibn Kathīr). The well-known event in the background of the revelation of this verse is, according to the majority of commentators, no other but this very account of the marriage of Sayyidah Zainab bint Jaḥsh (Ibn Kathīr, Qurṭubī and Maḥzarī).

Ibn Kathīr and some other commentators have also reported two additional events of this nature. There too, it has been said that the cited verse has been revealed in the background of those events. One of these

events is about Sayyidnā Julaibīb ؓ whose proposal to marry the daughter of an Anṣārī Ṣaḥābī was turned down by the father and his family. When this verse was revealed, they agreed and the marriage was solemnized. The Holy Prophet ﷺ made a *du'ā'* (prayer) for extended means of livelihood for them. The noble Companions say that Allah had placed such *barakah* in their home that it was known to be the most generously kept home of Madīnah at-Ṭayyibah. Later, Sayyidnā Julaibīb ؓ met with his *shahadah* in a Jihād. The Holy Prophet ﷺ bathed and shrouded his body with his own blessed hands.

A similar event relating to Umm Kulthūm bint 'Uqbah Ibn Abī Mu'aiṭ has been reported in Ḥadīth narrations (Ibn Kathīr, Qurṭubī) and there is no contradiction in them. It is possible that several events of this nature may have been the cause of the revelation of the verse.

### The Injunction to consider the principle of *كفو* (*kuf*) in marriage

The reason why Sayyidah Zainab bint Jaḥsh and her brother 'Abdullah had initially rejected the proposal of marriage with Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn Ḥārithah was that the two of them had no familial and lineal homogeneity, which is desirable even in the sight of the Shari'ah. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said that girls should be married in their *كفو* (*kuf*: equal, alike, matching) (to be explained later). Therefore, a question arises here as to why the excuse of Sayyidah Zainab and her brother was not accepted in this case?

The answer is that the equality, rather equalness (*كفاهت*: *kafā'ah*) and likeness of spouses in their religion is certainly incumbent and necessary for the validity of the marriage. The marriage of any Muslim girl with any disbeliever is not *ḥalāl* (lawful) under the consensus of the Muslim *ummah* - even if the girl agrees to it. The reason is that this is not simply the right of a woman which may be dropped at her pleasure. Instead, it is the right of Allah and a Divinely imposed duty. On the contrary, equality of the spouses in financial and lineal status is the right of the girl and in the matter of lineal equality, the guardians too have right alongwith the girl. If a sane and adult girl, despite being from a wealthy family, were to drop her right by agreeing to marry some pauper, the choice is hers. And in lineal equality, if the girl and her guardians, all of them, abandon this right for the sake of some other major expedient consideration and agree to the proposal of marriage from a person who is lesser than them in

terms of lineage and family status, then, they have the right to do so. In fact, should this be in view of higher religious consideration, the act of surrendering this right is most desirable and praiseworthy. It is for this reason that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has, on several occasions, recommended that this right should be ignored and marriage should be solemnized because of higher and more beneficial religious considerations.

And clear indicators set forth in the noble Qur'ān prove that the right of the Holy Prophet ﷺ on the men and women of his ummah is more than that of anyone else. In fact, it is more than that of their own self - as the Qur'ān says: *النَّبِيُّ أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ* that is, 'The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves - 33:6.' Therefore, in the case of Sayyidah Zainab and her brother, 'Abdullah, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ advised them to ignore their right to lineal equality and ordered them to agree to the marriage with Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn Ḥārithah, it was their duty to bypass their personal opinion and their own rights in the face of this prophetic order. Therefore, it was on this refusal from them that this injunction of the Qur'ān was revealed.

As for the lineal consideration in marriage, one may ask when it was worthy of consideration in the sight of the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself, why would he himself not go by it? The answer to this doubt is already clear from the earlier submission, that is, this consideration is worth surrendering in favour of other higher and more beneficial religious considerations. During the blessed period of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, several marriages were solemnized among non-equals (*ghayr-kuf'*) as based on these very kinds of beneficial religious considerations which do not violate the principle.

### **The Issue of Equality in marriage (*Kafā'ah*)**

Marriage (*nikāḥ*) is a matter in which the absence of homogeneity in the temperaments of the spouses disturbs the purpose of marriage, disturbs the process of fulfilling each other's rights and breeds mutual disputes. Therefore, the Sharī'ah has ordered that *kafā'ah* (mutual likeness) should be taken into consideration. But, it never means that a man of high family background starts taking a man from a family lesser than him as low and mean. In Islam, the criterion of low and high is based on Taqwā and love for one's faith. Whoever does not have it, no matter how noble his family is, he yet has no status in the sight of Allah.

So, this order to take *kafā'ah* (mutual equality) into consideration in marriages has been given only to keep the management of matters smooth and straight.

In a Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have said that the *nikāḥ* (marriage) of girls should invariably be through their guardians (that is, it is not appropriate even for a pubescent girl that she settles the transaction of her *nikāḥ* (marriage) all by herself. Modesty demands that this matter should be handled by her parents and guardians). And he said that the *nikāḥ* of girls should invariably be solemnized within their *kuf'* (equal, like). Though, the authority of this Ḥadīth is weak but, with the support from the reports and sayings of the noble Ṣaḥābah, it becomes worth being used as an argument. In Kitāb ul-Āthār, Imam Muḥammad has reported Sayyidnā 'Umar saying: "I shall issue an operative order that no girl from some high and recognized family should be given in marriage to another having a lesser status." Similarly, Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها and Sayyidnā Anas رضى الله عنه have also stressed that *kafā'ah* (likeness) should be taken into consideration in *nikāḥ* (marriage) - as reported from several authorities. Imām Ibn Humām has also written about it in details in Fath al-Qadīr.

Hence, the outcome is that the consideration of *kafā'ah* (equality and likeness) in *nikāḥ* (marriage) is desirable in religion, so that the spouses live in accord and harmony. But, should some other important consideration, more important than this *kafā'ah*, come up, then, it is permissible for the woman and her guardians that they surrender this right of theirs and marry in *ghayr kuf'*, that is, other than equal and like. Particularly so, when there is some religious consideration in sight - if so, it is better and more merit worthy to do so, as proved from several events pertaining to the noble Ṣaḥābah. Incidentally, from this we also know that these events do not negate the basic premise of the issue of *kafā'ah*. Allah knows best.

## The Second Event

As ordered by the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the marriage of Sayyidah Zainab bint Jaḥsh رضى الله عنها was solemnized with Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn Ḥārithah رضى الله عنه. But, their temperaments did not match and merge with each other. Sayyidnā Zayd used to complain about the sharpness of her tongue, the airs she assumed because of her inborn lineal nobility and her failure to

listen to him. On the other side, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was informed through revelation that Zayd would divorce her whereafter she would be married to him. On a certain day, Sayyidnā Zayd presented these very complaints before the Holy Prophet ﷺ and showed his intention to divorce her. The Holy Prophet ﷺ had, though, come to know through Divine revelation that things would transpire in a way that Zayd would divorce her after which she would be married to him, but it was for two reasons that he stopped Sayyidnā Zayd from giving a divorce. Firstly, because giving a divorce, though permissible in the Shari'ah of Islam, it is not desirable. In fact, it is the most detested and repugnant of things permissible - and the happening of something as a creation (Takwīnī) imperative does not affect the operative religio-legal order (*al-ḥukm at-tashrī'ī*). Secondly, also crossing his blessed heart there was the thought: If Zayd were to give divorce and Zainab were to be married to him consequently, the Arabs would, very much in line with their custom of the Jāhiliyyah, throw taunts on him that he had married the wife of his son. Although, the Qur'ān has already demolished this custom of Jāhiliyyah in the previous verse of this very Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb, following which there was no danger for a believer, even no scruple about it. But disbelievers, who reject the authority of the Qur'ān itself, would still come out with their taunts because of their pagan custom of taking an adopted son as the real son in all aspects of the Law. This very apprehension also became the cause of his prohibiting Sayyidnā Zayd from divorcing his wife. Revealed thereupon was an endearing reprimand from Allah Ta'ālā in the following verses of the Qur'ān:

وَإِذْ تَقُولُ لِلَّذِي أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْسِكْ عَلَيْكَ زَوْجَكَ وَاتَّقِ اللَّهَ  
وَتُخْفِي فِي نَفْسِكَ مَا اللَّهُ مُبْدِيهِ وَتَخْشَى النَّاسَ وَاللَّهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَخْشَاهُ<sup>ط</sup>

And (remember) when you were saying to the one who was favored by Allah and favored by you, "Keep your wife to your self, and fear Allah." And you were concealing in your heart what Allah was going to reveal, and you were fearing people, while Allah is more entitled to be feared by you. (33:37)

The 'one favored' referred to here means Sayyidnā Zayd and the first favour bestowed on him by Allah was that he was made a Muslim and secondly, that he was given the honor of staying in the company of the Messenger of Allah. As for the favour done to him by the Holy Prophet

ﷺ, the first thing he did was that he gave him his freedom from slavery. Secondly, he favored him by grooming and training him under his personal charge, he made him into a person who was respected even by the greatest of the great among the Ṣaḥābah. Onwards from here appears what he said to Sayyidnā Zayd: *أَمْسِكْ عَلَيْكَ زَوْجَكَ وَاتَّقِ اللَّهَ* (Keep your wife to your self and fear Allah). It means: 'Hold your wife in your bond of marriage, and do not divorce her and fear Allah.' The order to fear Allah at this place could also be taken to mean that divorce is a detested and repugnant act from which he should abstain. And it could also be taken in the sense that once he decides to hold her in his *nikāḥ*, let not his temperamental distaste become a cause of falling short in the fulfillment of her due rights. What the Holy Prophet ﷺ said was correct and sound in its place. But, after having learnt about the event as it would transpire through Divine revelation and after the intention of *nikāḥ* with Sayyidah Zainab having emerged in his heart, this advice of not divorcing given to Sayyidnā Zayd had remained at the level of a sort of formal expression of good wishes - something not appropriate to the station of a messenger of Allah, particularly so because, alongwith it, included therein was the apprehension of taunts from the people. Therefore, in the cited verse, the admonition was revealed in the words which mean, 'you were concealing in your heart what Allah was going to reveal.' When the information about his marriage with Sayyidah Zainab was conveyed to him from Allah and the intention of marriage had already crossed his heart, then, the act of hiding this intention and indulging in such formal remarks was not appropriate to his station. As for the apprehension of taunts from people, it was said, 'and you were fearing people, while Allah is more entitled to be feared by you - (37). In other words, 'when you knew that this thing is going to take place as a matter destined by Allah Ta'ālā - without there being any apprehension or danger of His displeasure in that case - then, simply because of the apprehension of taunts from people, such remarks were not appropriate.'

The details of this event appearing above have all been taken from Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, Qurtubī and Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī. As for the particular *tafsīr* of the verse: *تُخْفِي فِي نَفْسِكَ مَا اللَّهُ مُبْدِيهِ* (you were concealing in your heart what Allah was going to reveal - 37) that is, 'the thing that he kept to himself was the intention that should Zayd give the divorce, he would

marry her in accordance with the Divine decree' - this *tafsir* was reported by Tirmidhī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and other Ḥadīth experts from a narration of Sayyidnā 'Alī Ibn Ḥusain Zain ul-'Ābidīn. Its words are as follows:

أَوْحَى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى إِلَيْهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّ زَيْنَبَ سَيُطَلِّقُهَا زَيْدٌ وَيَتَزَوَّجُهَا بَعْدَهُ  
عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ (روح از حکیم ترمذی)

Allah Ta'ālā had informed the Holy Prophet ﷺ through revelation that Zainab is going to be divorced by Zayd and after that she was to be married to him - Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī from Tirmidhī.

And Ibn Kathīr has reported the following words with reference to Ibn Abī Ḥātim:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعْلَمَ نِيَّهِ، أَنَّهَا سَتَكُونُ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَتَزَوَّجَهَا فَلَمَّا آتَاهُ زَيْدٌ لِيَشْكُوَهَا  
إِلَيْهِ قَالَ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَأَمْسِكْ عَلَيْكَ زَوْجَكَ فَقَالَ أَخْبَرْتُكَ إِنِّي مُزَوِّجُكَهَا وَتُخْفِي  
فِي نَفْسِكَ مَا اللَّهُ مُبْدِيهِ،

Allah Ta'ālā had made His prophet know that she (Sayyidah Zainab) will also become one of his blessed wives. After that, when Zayd came to him with a complaint against her, he said, 'Fear Allah, keep your wife, do not divorce her.' Thereupon, Allah Ta'ālā said, 'I had made it known to you that I shall have her married to you, and you were concealing in your heart the thing that Allah was going to disclose.'

The majority of commentators - Zuhri, Bakr Ibn al-'Alā', al-Qushairī and Qādī Abū Bakr Ibn al-'Arabī - have adopted this very *tafsir*, that is, the mention of the thing he was keeping to himself was but this intention of marriage under Divine revelation. Counter to this there are narrations in which the words, "and you were concealing in your heart" have been explained as love for Zainab. About this *tafsir*, Ibn Kathīr has said, 'we did not like to mention these narrations as none of these is sound.'

Then the words of the Qur'an themselves lend support to this very *tafsir* mentioned above on the authority of Sayyidnā Zain ul-'Ābidīn because, in this verse, Allah Ta'ālā has Himself said very clearly that the thing hidden in the heart was what Allah Ta'ālā is going to disclose - and the thing that Allah Ta'ālā disclosed in the next verse (37) is *nikah* or marriage with Sayyidah Zainab as said in: زَوَّجْنَاكَهَا (We gave her into your marriage -37) (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

### To protect oneself against taunts thrown by people is praiseworthy unless it affects some objective of the Shari'ah

A question arises here as to why the Holy Prophet ﷺ chose to conceal this matter which became the cause of Divine displeasure only to avoid the taunts of a hostile people? To answer that, it can be said that there is an essential general rule in this matter which stands proved from the Qur'an and Sunnah. According to this rule, when doing an act may cause misunderstanding among people or may invite their taunts, then, in order to protect the faith of people and save them from the sin of throwing taunts, it is permissible to avoid that act, subject to the condition that this act itself should not be one of the objectives of the Shari'ah, and no religious injunction of *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* is related with it - even though, the act in itself be praiseworthy. In this matter, a precedent exists in the Ḥadīth and Sunnah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who said: When the Baytullah was constructed during the period of Jāhiliyyah, several things have been done contrary to the original structure laid out by Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ﷺ. First of all, some part of Baytullah was left outside the constructed area. Then, there were two doors for people to enter inside the Baytullah in the original foundational plan of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ﷺ, one towards the East and another towards the West because of which there used to be no difficulty with the entry in and exit from Baytullah. The people of the Jāhiliyyah made two unwarranted changes in it. They blocked the Western door totally and raised the Eastern door which used to be at ground level so high that no one could enter inside it without the help of a ladder. The purpose was to let only those they permitted go in.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: 'Had there been no danger of throwing neo-Muslims into misunderstanding, I would have raised the Baytullah once again in accordance with the Abrahimic foundation.' This Ḥadīth is present in all authentic books. From this we know that it was to save people from misunderstanding that the Holy Prophet ﷺ abandoned this intention of his, an intention which was, otherwise, praiseworthy in the light of the Shari'ah. And against this there came no admonition from Allah which also shows that this conduct of his was acceptable with Him. But, this matter of reconstructing the Baytullah in accordance with the Abrahimic foundation was not something among the objective of Shari'ah, nor something relating to the precepts of *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*.

As for the event of the marriage of Sayyidah Zainab رضى الله عنها, there was an Islamic legal objective to be achieved therewith, that is, to refute an evil custom of the Jāhiliyyah and to dispel, practically and openly, the erroneous notion of marriage being unlawful with the divorced wife of an adopted son. The reason is that eradication of wrong customs, dragging on and on among peoples for ages, becomes actually possible only when it is implemented practically and demonstrated openly. The Divine command had unfolded to fulfill this objective in a perfect manner in the case of the marriage of Sayyidah Zainab رضى الله عنها. On the basis of this deposition, the apparent dichotomy between the abandonment of the reconstruction of Baytullah and the implementation of the marriage of Sayyidah Zainab as Divinely ordained stands resolved, and answered.

And it seems that the Holy Prophet ﷺ took the oral communication of this injunction which has appeared in the earlier verses of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb (Verses 4 & 5) as sufficient for declaring the law, while the need and wisdom of its practical demonstration escaped his attention. Therefore, he let it remain concealed despite the knowledge and intention. Allah Ta'ālā put it right and said: لِكَيْ لَا يَكُونَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ حَرَجٌ فِي أَزْوَاجِ أَدْعِيَائِهِمْ إِذَا قَضَوْا مِنْهُنَّ وَطَرًا (so that there may not be a problem for the believers in marrying wives of their adopted sons, when they finish their desire for them - 37). It means: We gave Zainab in marriage to you so that Muslims do not have to face any practical difficulty in marrying the divorced wives of adopted sons.

And the statement: زَوَّجْنَاهَا literally means: 'We solemnized her *nikah* with you' or 'We gave her into your marriage.' This tells us that Allah Ta'ālā blessed this *nikāḥ* with such distinction that He Himself solemnized it - which makes it exempt from the usual conditions of *nikāḥ* or marriage. And it could also mean: 'We gave the command for this *nikāḥ*, now you marry her in accordance with the Islamic rules and conditions.' Some of the commentators have preferred the first probability while some others have gone by the second.

As for the saying of Sayyidah Zainab رضى الله عنها before other women, "Your *nikāḥ* was done by your parents. My *nikāḥ* was done by Allah Ta'ālā Himself on the heavens," which appears in Ḥadīth narrations, it turns out to be true both ways. Under the first probability, it is very clear while the other one too is not contrary to it.

### Prefacing an answer to doubts and objections

The opening sentence of verse 38: *سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ فِي الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ ط وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قَدَرًا مَفْعُورًا* (a customary practice of Allah in the case of those who have gone before--- And Allah's command is pre-determined by destiny - 38) is a preface to doubts to be encountered in the wake of this marriage, particularly about why so much concern was shown in the case of this marriage despite there being other wives in the household. It was said: 'This is a *sunnah* of Allah (His customary practice not restricted to Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ). It has continued to be so in the case of earlier prophets as well, that is, under the dictate of beneficial religious considerations, permission was given for multiple marriages. Well recognized among them are Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام and Sayyidnā Sulaiman عليه السلام. Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام had one hundred wives in his *nikāḥ* and Sayyidnā Sulaiman عليه السلام, three hundred. Now, if permission came for the Holy Prophet ﷺ to have several marriages under beneficial religious considerations - this *nikāḥ* being included therein - why should it be taken as something far-fetched? Neither is it contrary to the dignity and status of a prophet and messenger of Allah, nor against the norms of *zuhd* and *taqwā*. In the last sentence, it was also said that the matter of *nikāḥ* (marriage) too, like that of *rizq* or sustenance, is Divinely decided as to who will be married to whom. That which is written in the eternal destiny has to occur. In this event relating to Sayyidnā Zayd عليه السلام and Sayyidah Zainab رضي الله عنها, the factors of their mutual temperamental difference, the displeasure of Sayyidnā Zayd and then his resolve to divorce her were all chains of this very creational and destined imperative.

Mentioned next are particular attributes of the prophets عليهم السلام about whom we have learnt a while ago that they were permitted to have several wives in earlier times. It was said: *الَّذِينَ يُبَلِّغُونَ رِسَالَاتِ اللَّهِ* (those who convey the messages of Allah and have awe of Him and have no awe of anyone except Allah - 39), that is, all these esteemed prophets, may peace be upon them, convey the messages of Allah to their respective communities without fear of anyone.

### A wise consideration

Perhaps, in this, there may be a hint towards the wisdom behind the multiplicity of marriages allowed to the noble prophets عليهم السلام in that

all their sayings and doings must necessarily reach their communities, while being men, they spend a substantial part of their time in the section of the house where women and children live. During this time, if there comes a revelation or the prophet himself gives some order or does something, it all becomes a property held by their wives in trust on behalf of the community which can be transferred to it through wives alone. Other alternates are not free of difficulties. Therefore, should prophets have several wives, it would become easier to convey accounts of their words and deeds and their personal character in family life. Allah knows best.

The second attribute of the noble prophets has been described as: وَيَخْشَوْنَهُ وَلَا يَخْشَوْنَ أَحَدًا إِلَّا اللَّهَ (and have awe of Him and have no awe of anyone except Allah - 39). It means that these prophets keep fearing Allah and fear none but Allah. It is also included there that they, if appointed to preach something by practicing it as based on beneficial religious consideration, never fall short in it - and if some people throw taunts at them for doing so, they do not fear it.

### A doubt and its answer

Here, while mentioning the prophets, it has been said that they do not fear anyone except Allah. But, in the verse previous to it while referring to the Holy Prophet ﷺ it was said: تَخْشَى النَّاسَ (you fear people - 37). How would this be correct? The answer is that, in the cited verse, this matter of prophets not fearing anyone other than Allah has been mentioned in connection with the conveying of Divine messages while the Holy Prophet ﷺ, faced the fear of being taunted in a matter which was obviously of a worldly nature. It had nothing to do with his mission and prophethood. But, as soon as it became clear to him from the cited verses that this marriage too was a part of the practical aspect of his mission and prophethood, no fear of taunts, thereafter, from anyone stopped him from doing what he had to. And this marriage took place despite the objections raised by many disbelievers - which they still keep doing.

### Verse 40

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِن رَّسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ  
النَّبِيِّينَ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ﴿٤٠﴾

**Muḥammad is not a father of any of your men, but he is a messenger of Allah and the last of the prophets. And Allah is Knowledgeable of every thing. [40]**

### Commentary

The verse quoted above refutes the contention of those people who, in accordance with the custom of the days of ignorance, used to call Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn Harithah ﷺ as son of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and used to taunt at the *nikah* (marriage) of the Holy Prophet ﷺ with Sayyidah Zainab رضى الله عنها , after she had been divorced by Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn Harithah ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had married his son's wife. It was enough to say in refutation that the father of Sayyidnā Zayd ﷺ is not the Holy Prophet ﷺ but Harithah ﷺ. But in order to emphasize the matter, the statement has been generalized in the following words: (مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ) (Muḥammad ﷺ is not a father of any of your men). The sense is that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has no son at all. How can it be asserted against him that he has a son and that his divorced wife is forbidden to him because of being his son's wife?

A brief expression for this statement could have been مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِنْكُمْ (Muḥammad is not a father of any of you). But the wise Qur'an, by adding the word (رجال) (any of your men) has removed a possible objection that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is father of four sons - three sons Qāsim, Ṭayyib and Ṭāhir ﷺ born to Sayyidah Khadijah رضى الله عنها and Ibrāhīm ﷺ born to Sayyidah Mariyah al-Qibṭiyyah رضى الله عنها but all of them died during childhood and none of them reached manhood. It can also be said that at the time of revelation of this verse, none of his sons was alive, because Qāsim ﷺ, Ṭayyib and Ṭāhir had died, while Ibrāhīm ﷺ was not born at that time.

Although the objection of the opponents had been adequately replied by the above sentence, yet in order to remove other doubts as well, it is stated وَلَكِنْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (but a messenger of Allah). The word لكن *lakin* (but) is used in Arabic language to remove any doubt that could be raised about the preceding statement. In this case, a doubt could be raised against the negation of the statement that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not a father of any one. One could say that every prophet and messenger is the father of every man and women of his Ummah, and therefore the negation of his fatherhood would be tantamount to negation of his prophethood. This

doubt has been dispelled by لَكِنْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ( but a messenger of Allah ) which means that the rules regarding permissibility or impermissibility of marriage are applicable to the real and biological fatherhood that is quite different from a spiritual fatherhood enjoyed by the prophets in relation to the members of their Ummah. In this relationship these laws do not apply. Now the meaning of the full sentence is that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not the biological father of any of the men of the Ummah but he is the spiritual father of all of them.

This is also a rejoinder for another sarcasm that some Mushriks (polytheists) had uttered against the Holy Prophet ﷺ that (Allah forbid) he is أَبْتَرُ (issueless) that is, since he has no male offspring to continue the lineage and to propagate his message further; after a few days the whole story would come to an end. The above words have made it clear that although he has no biological sons, yet the biological sons are not in any case essential to spread the message of prophethood or to maintain and propagate it. This function is normally performed by one's followers who are his spiritual children, and since he is the spiritual father of the whole Ummah who are there to carry forward his mission, he excels all of you in the number of his ( spiritual )children.

Then, once the prophethood and messengership of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was mentioned here in which he carries a very special and distinct excellence over all other prophets, this distinctive eminence surpassing all other prophets has been indicated by the following words: ( and the Last of the Prophets ) وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ .

There are two ways to read the word خَاتِمَ Imām Ḥasan رحمه الله تعالى and 'Aṣim read this word as *khatam* whereas other leading scholars read it as *khatim*. The meaning remains the same in both cases, that is, 'the last of the prophets'. In both the cases, the word means the 'last' as well as the 'seal'. The meaning of the seal is also the 'last' because the seal is applied to something when it is intended to be closed. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has been called the seal of the prophets because the process of sending new prophets has come to an end on his advent. This is the gist of the explanation given in Tafsīr Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, Tafsīr of Al-Baydawī and Aḥmadi. The fact that both the words '*khatam*' and '*khatim*' carry the same meaning in this sentence has been affirmed by all the famous lexicons of the Arabic language.

Ibn Sidah, for example, in his *Almuḥkam* states that the the words '*khatim*' and '*khatimah*' with regard to everything means its end and its termination.

The gist is that both readings of the verse (*khatam* and *khatim*) convey the same meaning, that is, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has concluded the line of prophets; he has succeeded all the prophets and he is the last among all of them.

The Holy Prophet's ﷺ attribute of being the last of all the prophets demonstrates his excellence and distinction in all the perfections of prophethood and messengership, because in general, all things progress gradually reaching completion at the highest stage, and the end result is the real objective. The Holy Qur'ān has stated this clearly in *أَلْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي* (Today, I have perfected your religion for you and have completed My blessings upon you. - 15:3).

The religions of the previous prophets were also complete with regard to their respective times - none was defective. But absolute perfection was reached by the religion of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ which is the authority for all the ancient and modern human beings and will continue to be so up to the Doomsday.

By adding the phrase 'last of the prophets' after negating his being a father of a male boy, another point has been clarified here. The polytheists used to pass negative remarks against the Holy Prophet ﷺ by saying that he has no son, and therefore his lineage would not continue. By saying that he is the last of the prophets it is indicated that these remarks are based on ignorance, because he is the spiritual father of the whole Ummah which follows him and being the last prophet, all the races and nations to come in this world till the Doomsday would be included in his Ummah; as such the number of persons in his Ummah would be more than in other Ummah and his spiritual sons would be more than those of other prophets.

The Holy Prophet's ﷺ being the last prophet has also told us that his kindness and affection for his spiritual sons (i.e. for his Ummah) would be more than that of other prophets and he would be fully seized of the concern to identify and appreciate the needs which may arise till Doomsday because no prophet or wahy (Divine revelation) would come

after him. The prophets preceding him did not have this concern because they knew that when the nation would deviate and adopt erring ways, other prophets would come after them and reform the nation. But the Last Prophet ﷺ was seized of the concern that he should impart instructions to the Ummah for all the situations that it may face uptill Doomsday. The *aḥādīth* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ bear witness to the above, because he has told us even the names of most of those people who could be followed and who would come after him. Similarly, he has told us the details about the leaders who would misguide humanity in a manner that anybody who cares to ponder over those warnings would not have the slightest doubt left in his mind. That is why the Holy Prophet ﷺ said *أَبَى تَرَكْتُكُمْ عَلَى شَرِيعَةٍ بَيِّضَاءَ لَيْلُهَا وَنَهَارُهَا سَوَاءٌ* "I have left (you) on such an illuminated path where it does not make any difference whether it is day or night; there is no danger of being misguided at any time."

Another point to note in this verse is that Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ has been referred to in the beginning of the sentence as a *rasul* (messenger) and as such it would have been apparently more appropriate to use the word *khatam-ur-rusul* or *khatam-ul-mursalīn* (the last of the messengers) for him. But the wise Qur'ān has, instead, used the word *khatam-un-nabiyyin* (the last of the prophets). The reason is that according to the consensus of scholars, there is a difference between Nabī (prophet) and *rasul* (messenger). Nabī is that person whom Allah Ta'ālā (the Almighty) has selected for the reformation of His slaves and has honored him with His *Waḥy* (revelation), irrespective of whether He has given him a Book and a new Shari'ah (set of revealed rules and precepts) or He has appointed him to guide the followers of a previous Nabī according to a previous Nabī's Book and Shari'ah, like Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام was appointed to guide and reform his followers according to the Book and Shari'ah of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام. On the contrary, the word *rasul* (messenger) is used exclusively for a particular Nabī who has been given a Book and a new Shari'ah. As such Nabī is more general than *Rasūl*.

So the meaning of this verse is that the Holy Prophet ﷺ, being the last of the prophets, has concluded the line of prophets and no prophet will come after him, irrespective of whether he is given a Book and a Shari'ah or he succeeds a previous Nabī to follow his Book and Shari'ah.

It is now very clear that all kinds of prophets appointed by Allah came to an end with the Holy Prophet ﷺ; no prophet will be appointed after him.

Imām Ibn Kathīr, in his Tafsīr, says:

فَهَذِهِ الْآيَةُ فِي أَنَّهُ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدَهُ، وَإِذَا كَانَ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدَهُ فَلَا رَسُولَ بِالطَّرِيقِ الْأُولَى، لِأَنَّ مَقَامَ الرَّسَالَةِ أَحْصُ مِنْ مَقَامِ النَّبُوءَةِ، فَإِنَّ كُلَّ رَسُولٍ نَبِيٌّ وَلَا يَنْعَكِسُ، بِذَلِكَ وَرَدَّتِ الْأَحَادِيثُ الْمُتَوَاتِرَةُ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنْ حَدِيثِ جَمَاعَةٍ مِنَ الصَّحَابَةِ.

"This verse is the unambiguous proof of the belief that there would be no Nabī after the Holy Prophet ﷺ and since there would be no Nabī, there is no question of there being any rasul after him because Nabī is a general term and rasul is particular. And this is the belief which is evidenced by mutawatir *aḥādīth* which have reached us through the reports of a very large number of the Noble Companions ﷺ."

The Literal explanation of this verse has been given here in considerable detail because one imposter by the name of Mirzā Qadiyānī, considering this verse to be a hindrance in his way, has distorted the meanings of the verse and has introduced a host of conjectures in its explanation. The foregoing, al-Hamdulillah, is a befitting reply.

### The Issue of Termination of Prophethood

That the Holy Prophet ﷺ was the last of the prophets who has sealed and thus terminated prophethood, and that no other prophet is to be appointed after him and every claimant to prophethood is a liar and an infidel are well-settled issues on which there has been complete unanimity and consensus right from the days of the noble companions ﷺ upto the date. Therefore there was no need for a lengthy discussion on this subject. But the Qadiyānī sect has put in a lot of effort to create doubts in the minds of Muslims on this issue; by publishing hundreds of pamphlets and books they have tried to misguide those Muslims who are not well versed in religious knowledge. So this humble author has written a book titled "*Khatm-e-Nabuwat*" in which this issue has been fully detailed and clarified in the light of one hundred Qur'ānic verses, more than two hundred *aḥādīth* and hundreds of dictum of the classic as well as later scholars and learned people; the Qadiyānī deception and doubts created

thereby have been fully refuted. Some important points from that book are being reproduced here.

### The Holy Prophet's ﷺ Being the Last Prophet does not negate the descent of Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام in the last days

It is proved from many verses of the Qur'ān and from *mutawatir ahādīth* that in the last days before the doomsday, Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام would come into this world again, kill Dajjal ( the Antichrist ) and bring all misguidance to an end. The detailed proofs of this fact are given in my Arabic book 'At-tasriḥ'. Mirzā Qadiyānī, denying the descent of Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام, has proclaimed himself to be the predicted Masiḥ with the reasoning that if reappearance of Sayyidnā 'Īsā Ibn Maryam عليها السلام who was a prophet of Israelites, is accepted, then it would negate the Holy Prophet's ﷺ being the last of the prophets.

The clear reply is that the Holy Prophet's ﷺ being the last prophet means that nobody would be appointed as a prophet after him; it does not imply that somebody who was appointed a prophet earlier would be dismissed from his prophethood or that such a prophet would not be able to return to this world. But, of course, the prophet who returns to this world for the reformation of the Ummah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ while maintaining his prophethood, would carry out the reforms in the *Ummah* in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, as clarified in authentic *ahādīth*.

Imām Ibn Kathir, in explanation of this verse, has said:

والمراد بكونه عليه السلام خاتمتهم انقطاع حدوث وصف النبوة في احد من الثقلين بعد تحليته عليه السلام بها في هذه النشأة، ولا يقدر في ذلك ما اجتم عليه الامّة واشتهرت فيه الاخبار، ولعلها بلغت مبلغ التواتر المعنوي و نطق به الكتب على قول ووجب الايمان به وأكفر منكروه كالفلاسفة من نزول عيسى عليه السلام آخر الزمان، لأنه كان نبياً قبل ان يحلّى نبينا صلى الله عليه وسلم بالنبوة في هذه النشأة.

"The Holy Prophet ﷺ being the last of the prophets means that the office of prophethood stands terminated after him. No one would get this office after him. But it does not have any effect on the fact of the descent and reappearance of Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام in the last days on which there is a consensus of the whole *Ummah* and which is proved by a large number of *ahādīth* that

are almost mutawatir and by the Qur'ān itself according to some interpretations, because he had been given prophethood before the Holy Prophet ﷺ."

### Distortion of the Meaning of Prophethood and invention of new kinds of Prophethood

This claimant of prophethood adopted a new trick to pave the way for his claim by inventing a new kind of prophethood which simply does not exist in Qur'ān and Sunnah and neither is there any proof for it, but according to him this new kind of prophethood does not negate the decree of Qur'ān regarding the termination of prophethood. Briefly, he has introduced in prophethood the concept of reincarnation, which is well known in Hinduism and other religions. His contention is that if a person is dyed in the color of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, by virtue of his complete obedience to him and by following his footsteps, his coming to this world is the coming of the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself; such a person is in fact the shadow and incarnate demonstration of none else but the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Therefore, his claim does not negate the belief in the termination of prophethood after him.

But how can this invented kind of prophethood find its way to Islamic beliefs? There is no proof of it. Besides, the belief in termination of prophethood is a basic belief of Islam and as such it has been so thoroughly clarified by the Holy Prophet ﷺ under different topics at various times that no imposter can distort it. The full details can be seen in this author's book referred to earlier, but only some necessary proofs of this belief are being presented here.

Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim and almost all books of Ḥadīth have reported from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه with authentic chain of narrators that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said,

ان مثلي ومثل الانبياء من قبلي كمثل رجل بنى بيتاً فاحسنه واجمله الاموضع لبنة من زاوية، فجعل الناس يطوفون به ويعجبون له ويقولون هلاً: وضعت هذه اللبنة؟ وانا خاتم النبيين، رواه احمد والنسائي والترمذي وفي بعض الفاظه فكنت انا سدوت موضع اللبنة وختم بي النبيان

"The example of all the prophets before me and of myself is like a man has built a very strong and well decorated house in one corner wall of which space has been left vacant for one brick; people roam about in the home to see it and admire the

construction but all of them say that why did not the builder put a brick in that space also which would have completed the construction. I am that last brick (of the palace of prophethood)" and in some versions he said "I have filled up that vacant space and thus completed the palace of prophethood."

The gist of this eloquent simile is that prophethood is like a grand palace composed of Prophets ﷺ. This grand palace was complete in all respects before the Holy Prophet ﷺ except for the placement of one brick. The Holy Prophet ﷺ completed this grand palace by filling up that vacant space for one brick. Now there is no more space for any prophet or messenger. Even if it is supposed that there are other kinds of prophets and messengers, there is just no more space for them in the palace of prophethood.

In another Ḥadīth narrated by Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه reported in Ṣaḥīḥs of Bukhārī, Muslim, Musnad of Aḥmad, etc., the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

كانت بنو اسرائيل تسوسهم الانبياء كلما هلك نبي خلفه نبي وانه لاني بعدى و  
سيكون خلفاء فيكثرون (الحديث)

"The politics and administration of Banu Isrā'īl was being handled by the prophets themselves. When one prophet expired, another prophet would take his place. And after me there is no prophet, but of course, there would be my khulafā' (caliphs - successors) who would be numerous."

This Ḥadīth has made it clear that there would be no prophet after the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the education and instruction of the Ummah would be carried out by his Khulafā'. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has explicitly and clearly told us that there is no prophethood of any kind after him, otherwise he would have mentioned it in this Ḥadīth where he has mentioned Khulafā'.

Ṣaḥīḥs of Bukhārī and Muslim have reported a Ḥadīth narrated by Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه :-

لَمْ يَبْقَ مِنَ النَّبُوَّةِ إِلَّا الْمُبَشِّرَات

"Nothing is left of prophethood except *mubashshirat* (true dreams)".

As reported in Musnad of Aḥmad, etc., Sayyidah Ṣiddiqah 'Ā'ishah

رضى الله عنها and Sayyidah Umm Kurz al- K'abiyah رضي الله عنها have stated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

لا يبقى بعدى من النبوة شيء إلا المبشرات، قالوا: يا رسول الله! وما المبشرات؟  
قال: الرؤيا الصالحة يراها المسلم أو ترى له. (طبراني، كذا في الكنز)

"Nothing is left of prophethood after me except mubashshirat. The noble companions ﷺ asked: O Holy Prophet ﷺ! What is *mubashshirat*? He replied, "True dreams that a Muslim sees himself or somebody else sees about him."

This Ḥadīth has so explicitly told that no kind of prophethood, either one with a new law or without it, either *Zilli* (shadowy) or *Buruzi* (incarnate), is possible after the Holy Prophet ﷺ; people would only have *mubashshirat* (true dreams) through which they would find out a few things.

Musnad of Aḥmad and Tirmidhī carry a narration of Sayyidnā Anas Ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه wherein the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

إن الرسالة والنبوة قد انقطعت فلا رسول بعدى ولا نبي (رواه الترمذى وقال: هذا حديث صحيح)

"No doubt *risalah* (messengership) and *nubuwwah* (prophethood) stand terminated after me; after me there would neither be a *rasūl* (messenger) nor a *Nabī* (prophet)".

This Ḥadīth has made it clear that prophethood even without a new law is simply not there after the Holy Prophet ﷺ what to say of *zilli* or *buruzi* prophethood which are neither any form of prophethood nor are they recognized as such in Islam.

The objective is not to collect here all the *aḥādīth* pertaining to the issue of termination of prophethood; more than two hundred *aḥādīth* on this subject have been put together in my book "Khatm-e-Nabuwwat". The objective, by quoting a few of them is to advise that the categories of *zilli* and *buruzi* prophethood invented by Mirzā Qadiyānī is without any basis or proof, and moreover the *aḥādīth* quoted above have told explicitly that there is no kind of of prophethood whatsoever left to come after the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

That is why, right from the days of the noble companions رضي الله عنهم uptill today, all the schools of Muslim *Ummah* are unanimous on the belief that there cannot be any kind of *Nabī* or *Rasūl* after the Holy Prophet ﷺ and

whoever claims to be so is a liar and denier of the Qur'ān and is a disbeliever. The first general consensus of the noble companions رضي الله عنهم had evolved on this very issue as a result of which a holy war (*jihād*) was fought with Musaylimah, the liar, the false claimant of prophethood, during the period of the first Khalīfah Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه, in which he (Musaylimah) and his followers were killed.

The dictums and clarifications of the past Imāms and wise scholars of the *Ummah* are reproduced in considerable detail in the book "Khatm-e-Nabuwwat", some of them are being copied here also.

Ibn Kathir, in his tafsir, writes under this verse:

اخبر الله تعالى في كتابه ورسوله الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في السنة المتواترة عنه أنه لا نبي بعده ليعلموا ان كل من ادعى هذا المقام بعده فهو كذاب أفاك دجال ضالّ مضلّ. ولو تحرق وشعبذ واتي بانواع السحر والطلاسم والنيرنجيات فكلها محال وضلال عند اولى الالباب كما اجرى الله سبحانه على يد الاسود العنسى باليمن ومسيلمة الكذاب باليمامة من الاحوال الفاسدة والاقوال الباردة ما علم كل ذي لب وفهم وحجى انهما كاذبان ضالان لعنهما الله تعالى وكذلك كل مدع لذلك الى يوم القيمة حتى يختموا بالمسيح الدجال. (ابن كثير)

"Allah Ta'ālā in this Book and the Holy Prophet ﷺ in successive *aḥādīth* has informed that there is no Nabī after the Holy Prophet ﷺ so that people should know that whoever claims to be a prophet after him is a liar, a cheat, an imposter, a deviator who misguides others, no matter how many conjuring tricks he shows, magic spells he binds or talismanic wonders and sorceries he performs which are, in fact, sheer fallacies recognized as such by the people who have have knowledge and understanding. Allah Ta'ālā had let such perverse acts and utterances manifested at the hands of Aswad Al-'Ansi (claimant of prophethood) in Yemen and Musaylimah, the liar, (another claimant of prophethood) in Yamamah in a way that every intelligent and comprehending person, after hearing and seeing them, knew that both of them were liars and misguided. May Allah curse them. In the same way anyone who claims to be a prophet upto the Doomsday is a liar and an infidel and this stream of claimants of prophethood would end at Dajjal, the Anti-Christ."

Imām Ghazzali, while explaining the above mentioned verse and

discussing the belief in the termination of prophethood, has observed in his book '*Al-Iqtisād fil I'tiqād*' as follows,

وليس فيه تاويل ولا تخصيص ومن أوله بتخصيص فكلامه من الهديان لا يمنع الحكم بتكفيره لأنه مكذب لهذا النص الذي اجمعت الامة على انه غير مأول ولا مخصوص .

"The entire Ummah has unanimously understood from these words and from circumstantial evidences that there will never be a prophet after him ever, nor will ever come a messenger of Allah. These words (of the verse) can neither be interpreted in any other sense, nor can their generality be restricted."

Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ in his book '*Ash-shifa*', after declaring that a person who claims to prophethood after the Holy Prophet ﷺ is a liar and an infidel who does not believe in this verse, has observed as follows:

واجمعت الامة على حمل هذا الكلام على ظاهره، وان مفهومه المراد به دون تاويل ولا تخصيص، فلا شك في كفر هؤلاء الطوائف كلها قطعاً اجماعاً وسمعاً.

"The Ummah holds by consensus that this discourse bears the obvious meaning and that this verse means what it says, without any other interpretation or any exception. Therefore, there is no doubt in the *kufr* (infidelity) of all those sects (who follow any claim out of prophethood) rather their *kufr* stands absolutely proved in view of the consensus of the *Ummah* and the express texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

### Verses 41 - 48

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا ﴿٤١﴾ وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ﴿٤٢﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَلِّيْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلَائِكَتُهُ لِيُخْرِجَكُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ ط وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا ﴿٤٣﴾ تَحِيَّتُهُمْ يَوْمَ يَلْقَوْنَهُ سَلَامٌ مَّ وَاَعَدَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَرِيمًا ﴿٤٤﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا ﴿٤٥﴾ وَدَاعِيَا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا ﴿٤٦﴾ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِأَنَّ لَهُم مِّنَ اللَّهِ فَضْلًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٤٧﴾ وَلَا تَطِعِ الْكُفْرِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ وَدَعُ أَذْيَهُمْ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ط

وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿٤٨﴾

O those who believe, remember Allah abundantly, [41] and proclaim His purity at morn and eve. [42] He is such that He and His angels send blessings to you, so that He brings you out from all sorts of darkness into Light. And He is Very-Merciful to the believers. [43] Their greeting, the Day they will meet Him, will be, "Salām" (Peace). And He has prepared for them a noble reward. [44]

O prophet, We have sent you as a witness and a bearer of good news and a warner, [45] and as one who calls (people) towards Allah with His permission, and as a luminous lamp. [46] And give good news to the believers that they are to receive a huge bounty from Allah. [47] And do not obey the infidels and the hypocrites, and just ignore any hurt (that afflicts you) from them, and place your trust in Allah. And Allah is sufficient (for you) to take care of all matters. [48]

### Commentary

Mentioned in the preceding verse was the incident of Sayyidnā Zaid رضي الله عنه and Sayyidah Zainab رضي الله عنها, and in relation to it the Holy Prophet's being the last of the prophets has been stated in the context of directions for the respect and reverence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and saving oneself from causing any pain to him.

Further on also, the perfect attributes of the Holy Prophet ﷺ are going to be stated; his person and attributes are the greatest blessings for Muslims in this world. The instruction of remembering Allah in abundance is given in the above verse to show gratitude for those blessings.

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه has stated that there is no form of worship except ذِكْرُ اللَّهِ *dhikrullah* (remembrance of Allah) for which Allah has not fixed a limit; for example, Ṣalāh is prescribed five times a day and the number of *rak'at* are determined for each Ṣalāh; fasting throughout the month of Ramadan is determined, Ḥajj can be performed only at a particular place and at a particular time, Zakāh is prescribed once a year at a particular rate. But *dhikrullah* is a form of worship for which there is no limit or defined quantity, no particular time or period, no defined

posture or position, nor even the state of purity through ablution is required. Dhikrullah is required all the time, in all circumstances, whether one is traveling or is at home, whether one is healthy or ill, whether one is on land or at sea, whether it is day or night - *dhikrullah* is required all the time.

Therefore no excuse is acceptable for neglecting *dhikrullah* except that one may have lost his senses and become unconscious. In case of all forms of worship, other than *dhikrullah*, if one becomes unable due to illness or compelling circumstances, one is allowed reduction, brevity or exemption altogether, but in case of *dhikrullah* there are no extenuating circumstances. Therefore, no excuse is considered valid for omitting it and the merits, blessings and rewards for doing it are also numerous.

Imām Aḥmad has reported from Sayyidnā Abū ad-Darda' رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said to the noble companions رضي الله عنهم, 'Should I not tell you a thing that is better than all your deeds and is most acceptable to your Lord, and which would raise your grades, and is better than giving silver and gold in charity and alms and is also better than your embarking for Jihad wherein you face and kill the enemy and the enemy kills you? The noble companions رضي الله عنهم asked the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم about that thing. The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, ذِكْرُ اللَّهِ عَزَّوَجَلَّ that is, remembrance of Allah, the Mightiest the Most Glorious". (Ibn Kathīr)

Imām Aḥmad and Tirmidhī also have reported that Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه said that he had heard a prayer from the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم which he does never miss. It is the following:

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي أُعْظِمُ شُكْرَكَ وَأَتَّبِعُ نَصِيحَتَكَ وَأُكْثِرُ ذِكْرَكَ وَأَحْفَظُ وَصِيَّتَكَ

"O Allah make me so that I keep thanking You profusely, I keep obeying your instructions, I keep remembering You abundantly and I safeguard (to follow) your advice." (Ibn Kathīr)

Here the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has supplicated to Allah Ta'ālā for ability to engage in dhikrullah abundantly.

A Beduin said to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم that the number of good deeds, obligations in Islam are many; so please tell me something concise and comprehensive which I could hold on to firmly. The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم told him,

لَا يَزَالُ لِسَانُكَ رَطْبًا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى

That your tongue remains always wet with the *dhikr* of Allah.  
(Musnad Aḥmad, Ibn Kathīr)

Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd رضي الله عنه has narrated that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has said "أذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ تَعَالَى حَتَّى يَقُولُوا مَجْنُونٌ" "Remember Allah, the Almighty so much so that people start calling you crazy." (Ibn Kathīr from Musnad Aḥmad)

And Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه has narrated that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has said that a gathering of people wherein Allah is not mentioned would prove to be a matter of remorse on the Doomsday for those sitting therein. (Aḥmad, Ibn Kathīr)

وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ("And proclaim His purity at morn and eve". 33:42)  
Here morning and evening may, metaphorically, mean all the time. Alternatively, morning and evening have been mentioned specifically to lay emphasis on carrying out *dhikrullah* during these times and to indicate that it carries more blessings - otherwise *dhikrullah* is neither specified nor limited to any particular time.

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَلِّيْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلَائِكَتُهُ (He is such that He and His angels send blessings to you. 33:43) It means that when you have become used to *dhikrullah* in abundance and have become regular in recounting the perfections of Allah morning and evening, Allah would honor you and respect you by bestowing His Blessings and by the angels supplicating for you.

The word 'Ṣalāh' has been used in this verse for Allah Ta'ālā as well as for the angels but the applicable meaning are different. For Allah it means His bestowing blessings, and for angels who have no volition on their own, it means their supplication to Allah to bestow His blessings.

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه has stated that Ṣalāh from Allah is blessing, from angels it is prayer for forgiveness and from humans it is supplication. The word Ṣalāh carries all the three meanings.

نَحِيْبُهُمْ يَوْمَ يَقْبَلُوْنَهُ سَلَامٌ (Their greeting, the Day they will meet Him, will be, "Salām" - 33:44). This is the explanation of the Ṣalāh that is sent to believers from Allah. It means that the day they would meet Allah, they will be respectfully addressed by Him with the word, 'Salām' i.e. (Assalamu 'alaykum) . The day of meeting Allah according to Imām

Rāghib, would be the Doomsday; some other leading exegetes say that it would be when they enter Paradise and they would receive Salām from Allah Ta'ālā as well as from the angels; and yet other scholars consider it to be the day of death when they would leave the whole world to be present before Allah as stated by Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه that when the Angel of Death goes to a believer to extract the spirit of life out of him, he gives him a message that his Lord has sent to him Salām. The word 'meeting' is true in all the three cases. Therefore there can be no objection or contradiction in the traditions, because Salām from Allah Ta'ālā is sent on all the three occasions.

### Note

This verse has proved that when Muslims meet each other, their greeting should be *assalamu 'alaykum* whether from the older to the younger or from the younger to the older.

### Special Attributes of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَدَاعِيًا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا

O prophet, We have sent you as a witness and a bearer of good news and a warner and as one who calls (people) towards Allah with His permission, and as a luminous lamp. (33:45-46)

The text here reverts to the special perfect attributes of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Five attributes have been mentioned here - 'Shāhīd', 'mubashshir', 'nadhir', 'da'i ila Allah'. 'sirāj munīr'. 'Shāhīd' (a witness) means that the Holy Prophet ﷺ will be a witness of the *ummah* on the Day of Judgment according to a *ḥadīth* narrated by Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه and reported by Bukhārī, Nasa'ī and Tirmidhī. It is mentioned in some parts of that *Ḥadīth* that on the Day of Judgment when Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام will be presented before Allah, he will be asked whether he had conveyed Allah's Message to his Ummah. He will reply that he did. Then his Ummah will be presented and they will deny having received any message of Allah. Then Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام will be asked whether he has any witness to his claim of having conveyed the message of truth, and he will reply that Muḥammad ﷺ and his Ummah are witnesses. Some narrations have it that he will present the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ as witness and this Ummah will give evidence in his favour. At this, the Ummah of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام will argue 'How can they, who were not even born at that time, give evidence in our case?'

Now the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ will be asked to substantiate their evidence and they will answer that no doubt they were not born at that time but they were told about it by their Holy Prophet ﷺ in whom they believe and trust. At this time the Holy Prophet ﷺ will be asked to give testimony regarding the veracity of his Ummah's statement.

Briefly, the Holy Prophet ﷺ through his testimony, will confirm and verify the statement of his Ummah that, of course, he had given them that news.

Another general meaning of being a witness for the Ummah may be that the Holy Prophet ﷺ will give evidence about the good and bad deeds of all the individuals of his Ummah. And this evidence would be on the basis that the deeds of the Ummah are presented before the Holy Prophet ﷺ every morning and evening daily; some narrations state that the deeds are presented once a week. The Holy Prophet ﷺ thus recognizes each and every individual of his Ummah by their deeds and as such he will be made witness for the Ummah on the Doomsday. (Ibn al-Mubarak from Sa'īd Ibn al- Musayyab, Mazhari)

'Mubashshshir' means bearer of good news, and as such the Holy Prophet ﷺ is the announcer of the good news of Paradise for the righteous people of his *Ummah*.

'Nadhir' means the one who warns; thus the Holy Prophet ﷺ also puts the fear of Allah's punishment in the hearts of his Ummah in case they violate or disobey the injunctions of Shari'ah.

'One who calls people to Allah' means that the Holy Prophet ﷺ calls his Ummah to believe in Allah's Being, Oneness and obedience. The act of calling towards Allah has been qualified by the phrase 'with His permission'. It means that the Holy Prophet ﷺ calls and invites people towards Allah with His permission. This condition is an indication that preaching and inviting towards Allah are very difficult tasks which cannot be performed successfully without Allah's permission and help.

سِرَاج (Sirāj) means lamp and مُنِير ('Munir') means luminous. The fifth attribute of the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been stated that he is a luminous lamp, and some are of the view that 'luminous lamp' refers here to the Qur'ān. But the context suggests that this is also an attribute of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Qāḍī Thana'ullāh has stated in Tafsīr Maḥzarī that "the Holy Prophet's ﷺ function of calling towards Allah pertains to his speech and outward acts, his attribute of being a 'luminous lamp' pertains to his blessed heart. Just as the sun illuminates the whole world, in the same way, the hearts of the faithful become illuminated by the radiant light of his heart. That is why the noble companions who were the beneficiaries of his company in this world are superior and more exalted than the whole of the Ummah, because their hearts were illuminated and graced by his heart directly; the rest of the Ummah received this radiant light indirectly through the noble companions and their successors and so on."

It can also be said that all prophets, specially the Holy Prophet ﷺ, after having passed away from this world are alive in their graves. Their life in *barzakh* (transition between death and the Day of Resurrection) is much more superior than the transit-life of common people, the reality of which is known to Allah Ta'ālā only. However due to this life, the hearts of all Muslims would keep on receiving the radiant light of his blessed heart, and the share of each individual would be in accordance with the intensity of love and reverence he has towards the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the abundance of Ṣalāh (*durud*) he offers to him.

The radiant light of the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been metaphorically described as a 'lamp', even though his inner radiance is far brighter than the sun. This is because the sun illuminates only the surface of the world, whereas his blessed heart illuminates the inside of the whole world and the hearts of the faithful. The reason for this simile appears to be that obtaining advantage from the light of a lamp is voluntary and available all the time easily, whereas approaching the sun is well-nigh impossible and its light is not available all the time.

The attributes of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, as stated in the Holy Qur'ān, are also mentioned in Torah as reported by Imām Bukhārī that Sayyidnā 'Ata' Ibn Yasar says that one day when I met Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr Ibn al-'As ؓ asked him to tell me the attributes of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as stated in Torah. He said, "of course, I will tell you. By Allah! some of the attributes of the Holy Prophet ﷺ mentioned in the Qur'ān are also there in Torah" And then he quoted the following extract.

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَحُرًّا لِلْأَمِّيِّينَ، أَنْتَ عَبْدِي وَرَسُولِي سَمِيَّتِكَ

الْمُتَوَكِّلِ، لَيْسَ بَفِظٍ وَلَا غَلِيظٍ وَلَا سَخَابٍ فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ وَلَا يَدْفَعُ السَّيِّئَةَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ  
وَلَكِنْ يَغْفُو وَيُغْفِرُ لَنْ يَقْبِضَهُ، اللَّهُ تَعَالَى حَتَّى يُقِيمَ بِهِ الْمِلَّةَ الْعُوجَاءَ بَانَ يَقُولُوا لَا إِلَهَ  
إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَيَفْتَحْ بِهِ أَعْيُنًا عُمَيًّا وَأَذَانًا صُمًّا وَقُلُوبًا غُلْفًا.

"O Prophet ﷺ! We have sent you as a witness, as a bearer of glad tidings, as a warner and as a refuge and protection for the illiterate Arabs. You are My slave and messenger. I have named you "mutawakkil" (i.e. one who trusts in Allah). You are neither ill-tempered nor hard natured nor one who raises noise in the markets; you do not repay wickedness with wickedness, rather you forbear and forgive. Allah Ta'ālā would not recall you from the world till He has straightened out the crooked Ummah through you and they start saying 'lā ilaha illallāh'. Allah would open up unseeing eyes, un-hearing ears and locked-up hearts through you".

The Holy Qur'ān, after attributing the above qualities to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, is asking him to carry on his functions, that is, to give the good news to the faithful that they are going to receive great bounties and mercy from Allah and not to obey the desires of the infidels and hypocrites. It was, though, not possible for the Holy Prophet ﷺ obey the infidels and the hypocrites or to give up preaching and inviting people, yet there was a chance that, in order to avoid people's sarcasm and taunts, he might have inclined to avoid marrying Sayyidah Zainab رضي الله عنها that was, in fact, a practical demonstration of the divine rule of Shari'ah. This has been alluded to as obeying the infidels and hypocrites. He was further directed not to mind any vexation that he may receive from the infidels and hypocrites (as he did) and also not to worry about physical harm afflicted by them, but in case such a thought crosses his mind, he was directed to trust in Allah, because Allah is enough to put all matters right - He will protect him from all harms, and if an apparent harm is caused during preaching, it is a gain in reality, and is not against the promise of protection and putting things right.

#### Verse 49

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نَكَحْتُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ثُمَّ طَلَقْتُمُوهُنَّ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ  
تَمْسُوهُنَّ فَمَالِكُمْ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ عِدَّةٍ تَعْتَدُونَهَا فَمَتَّعُوهُنَّ

وَسَرَّحُوهُنَّ سَرَاحًا جَمِيلًا ﴿٤٩﴾

O those who believe, when you marry the believing women then divorce them before you have touched them, then they have no obligation of any 'iddah (waiting period) for you that you may count. So give them (due) benefits, and release them in a pleasant manner. [49]

### Commentary

Some attributes and the special eminence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ have been mentioned in the preceding verse. Some special rules that are exclusive to him in matters of marriage and divorce are intended to be mentioned in forthcoming verses in which he has a distinction over the general Ummah. But before that, a general rule regarding divorce has been mentioned as a prologue which is applicable to all Muslims in general.

**There are three injunctions regarding divorce in this verse.**

**The first injunction** is that if after *nikah* (marriage) a woman is divorced before the spouses have had full privacy *الخلوة الصحيحة* (Al-khalwah Aṣ-ṣaḥīḥah), then she is not liable to any period of 'iddah (waiting period), which means that she can enter into another marriage immediately. In the present verse, 'touching' means having sexual intercourse, either actually or by presumption, because if the spouses meet together at a private place without any apprehension of interference by someone and there is nothing to prevent them from having sex, this type of privacy (Al-khalwah Aṣ-ṣaḥīḥah) carries the same legal consequences as an actual intercourse.

**The second injunction** is that the divorced woman should be separated gracefully and by giving some gifts to her. Giving something to a divorced woman at the time of her departure is desirable according to Sunnah, and in some cases it is compulsory as elaborated in verse 236 of Sūrah Al-Baqarah *لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ مَا لَمْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ* - There is no sin on you if you divorce women when you have not touched them. - 2:236). The use of the word '*mata*' here is perhaps based on the wisdom that this word has a wide and general meaning and is applicable to anything which may be beneficial, which includes the woman's obligatory rights,

like *mahr* (dower), etc., which means that the dower, if not already paid, has to be paid at the time of divorce gladly; and it also includes her rights that are not compulsory, for example, a set of clothes to be gifted to her at the time of departure, which is *mustahab* (commendable) in respect of every divorced woman and the Qur'ān has persuaded the husband for both, the compulsory as well as commendable rights.

A leading scholar of Ḥadīth 'Abd Ibn Ḥumayd has narrated the dictum of Sayyidnā Ḥasan رضي الله عنه that every divorced woman has to be given something as *mut'ah* whether one has had Al-khalwah Assaḥīḥah (full privacy) with her or not and whether her *mahr* (dower) was fixed or not.

### **Details of Mut'ah to be given at the time of Divorce**

Badai', the famous book of Ḥanafī *fiqh* has mentioned that *mut'ah* of divorce means those clothes which a woman wears necessarily when going out. It includes a pair of trousers, long shirt, *shawl* and a large sheet as covering from head to feet. Clothes can be graded as high quality, medium and ordinary. Muslim jurists have determined that if both the husband and wife belong to wealthy families, the clothes have to be of high quality; if they are both poor, then the clothes should be of ordinary quality, and if one is poor and the other wealthy, then the clothes may be of medium quality.

### **Islam's matchless teaching in discharging social obligations gracefully**

Recognition of rights and a courteous behavior towards others is restricted in common practice to relatives, friends and at the best it is extended to common people. Recognizing and discharging of the rights of opponents and foes and devising rules and regulations for their execution is a distinct feature of Islamic teachings. Although many organizations have been established in our days exclusively for the protection of human rights, and some rules and regulations have also been devised for this purpose. Huge sums of money are collected as donations from all over the world for this objective, but all of them are politically oriented and whenever they do help the suffering people, such help is not available everywhere, nor is it without a motive. It is rather given to fulfill their own political aims. And, supposing, these organizations do start functioning properly to serve the suffering humanity, the most they can do is to help when some area is affected by a devastating storm, epidemic

disease, etc. But who would know about the suffering of individuals and single persons? Who can reach them? Let us look at the matter of divorce which obviously is a result of mutual discord, anger and disharmony which usually results in the relationship which was established on the basis of extreme concord, love and affection changing to the opposite i.e. combined emotions of hate enmity and revenge. The above mentioned verse of the Holy Qur'ān and many other similar verses have given such instructions to Muslims to be observed right at the time of divorce that they fully test gracefulness of behavior and courteous discharge of social obligations. The emotions keep on inciting one to take as much revenge as one can from the woman who has inflicted so much pain and agony to him that the relationship had to be terminated. But the noble Qur'ān has bound the common divorced woman to stay during the period of *'iddah* in the house of her husband; it has been made obligatory on the husband not to turn the divorced woman out of his house during the period of *'iddah* and to continue to provide her the usual daily maintenance and upkeep during that period. It has also been made desirable for the husband to give her *mut'ah* i.e. a set of clothes at the time of departure after completion of the period of *'iddah* and to release her with grace and respect. Only those women are exempt from the period of *'iddah* who have only gone through *nikah* without stepping into the husband's house, without having had true privacy, but more stress has been laid on offering *mut'ah* to them as compared to other women.

**The third injunction is:** (سَرِّحُوهُنَّ سَرَاحًا جَمِيلًا) "Release them gracefully" which has imposed a restriction on the husband not to say anything harsh even verbally nor to indulge in taunts or sarcasms.

Only that person can honor the rights of the opponents during confrontation who can control his emotions and passions. All the teachings of Islam have laid due emphasis on this principle.

### Verses 50 - 52

يَأَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَحْلَلْنَا لَكَ أَزْوَاجَكَ الَّتِي آتَيْتَ أُجُورَهُنَّ وَمَا  
 مَلَكَتْ يَمِينُكَ مِمَّا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ وَبَنَاتِ عَمِّكَ وَبَنَاتِ عَمَّتِكَ  
 وَبَنَاتِ خَالِكَ وَبَنَاتِ خَالَتِكَ الَّتِي هَاجَرْنَ مَعَكَ وَامْرَأَةً مُؤْمِنَةً إِنْ

وَهَبَتْ نَفْسَهَا لِلنَّبِيِّ إِنْ أَرَادَ النَّبِيُّ أَنْ يَسْتَنْكِحَهَا خَالِصَةً لَّكَ مِنْ  
 دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۗ قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا فَرَضْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِي أَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَمَا  
 مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ لِكَيْلَا يَكُونَ عَلَيْكَ حَرَجٌ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا  
 رَحِيمًا ﴿٥٠﴾ ۝ تُرْجَى مِنْ تَشَاءُ مِنْهُنَّ وَتُؤَى إِلَيْكَ مِنْ تَشَاءُ ۗ وَمِنْ  
 ابْتِغَايَتِ مِمَّنْ عَزَلْتَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكَ ۗ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَنْ تَقْرَءَ عَيْنُهُنَّ  
 وَلَا يَحْزَنَ وَيَرْضَيْنَ بِمَا آتَيْتَهُنَّ كُلَّهُنَّ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ ۗ  
 وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَلِيمًا ﴿٥١﴾ ۝ لَا يَحِلُّ لَكَ النِّسَاءُ مِنْ بَعْدُ وَلَا أَنْ  
 تَبَدَّلَ بِهِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ حُسْنُهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا مَلَكَتْ يَمِينُكَ ۗ  
 وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ رَقِيبًا ﴿٥٢﴾

O prophet, We have made lawful for you all your wives whom you have given their dowers, And those (bondwomen) whom you own, out of the captives Allah has given to you as spoils of war, and daughters of your paternal uncle, and daughters of your paternal aunts, and daughters of your maternal uncle, and daughters of your maternal aunts, who have migrated with you, and a believing woman who offers herself for (marrying) the prophet without dower, if the prophet wishes to bring her into his marriage, these rules being exclusive for you, and not for the (rest of the) believers, — We know what We have prescribed for them in respect of their wives and the slave-girls they own --- so that there should be no difficulty for you. And Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [50] You may postpone (the turn) of any one you wish from among them, and may accommodate with you any one you wish. And should you recall any one from those whom you kept aside, there is no blame on you. It is more likely, in this way, that their eyes will stay content, and they will not grieve, and all of them will be happy with whatever you give to them. And Allah knows whatever lies in your hearts. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. [51] No women are lawful for you after this, nor is it lawful that you replace them ( the present wives) with other wives, even though their goodness may attract you,

except the bond-women you own. And Allah is watchful of every thing. [52]

### Commentary

These verses contain seven injunctions about marriage and divorce that are specific to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and these specifics signify his distinctive eminence and his special honor. Some of these injunctions are such that their being specific to the Holy Prophet ﷺ is absolutely plain and obvious and some of them are such that, despite their being general for all Muslims, they are subject to certain conditions and qualifications that are specific to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The details are given below:

#### The First injunction

إِنَّا أَخْلَلْنَا لَكَ أَزْوَاجَكَ الَّتِي أَنْتَ أُجُورُهُنَّ (O prophet We have made lawful (*ḥalāl*) for you all your wives whom you have given their dowers - 50.) Apparently, this ruling is general for all Muslims, because their existing wives are lawful for them too, but the reason for its being specific is that, at the time of revelation of this verse, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had more than four wives, while it is not permissible for Muslims in general to keep more than four wives at any time. So it was particular for the Holy Prophet ﷺ that having more than four wives was made lawful for him.

The words, الَّتِي أَنْتَ أُجُورُهُنَّ "whom you have given their dowers" in this verse are not of restrictive nature nor a pre-condition for permissibility of keeping them as wives, but it is a statement of fact that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had paid the mahr (dower) of all the women with whom he had performed nikah promptly in cash and did not leave it as debt payable by him. His noble practice was to pay or give whatever was due to him immediately and become free of the liability, without delaying it unnecessarily. The statement of this fact is to persuade Muslims in general to follow this practice.

#### The second Injunction

وَمَا مَلَكَتْ يَمِينُكَ مِمَّا آفَاءَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ (And those (bond women) whom you own out of the captives Allah has given to you as spoils of war").

The word آفَاءَ used here for the spoils of war is فَيْ 'fai' which in its technical sense is restricted to the wealth acquired from the enemy without actual fighting. But at times it is used for the spoils of war acquired through actual fighting. Here the word is used in a general

sense. Moreover, it does not mean that only those slave-girls will be lawful for him who would come to him as his share in the spoils of war, but the permissibility covers those bondwomen also who were purchased by him. But, apparently, in this injunction, there is nothing particular for the Holy Prophet ﷺ because this is a rule for all Muslims and the whole Ummah that those bondwomen whom they own as their share in the spoils of war or those who are purchased for a price are lawful for them. At the same time the style of the context indicates that the injunctions contained in these verses should have some special applications for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. As such it is stated in 'Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī' as a particularity of the Holy Prophet that just as the *nikāḥ* of any of his ﷺ wives with any other Muslim is not lawful after him, similarly any of his bondwomen is not lawful for any Muslim after him ﷺ. Accordingly the *nikāḥ* of Sayyidah Mariyah Al-Qibṭiyyah رضى الله عنها who was sent by the Roman Emperor Muqauqis as gift to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, was not made lawful for anyone after him.

### The third Injunction

بَنَاتِ عَمِّكَ وَبَنَاتِ عَمَّتِكَ The daughters of paternal uncle and of paternal aunts and the daughters of the maternal uncle and of maternal aunt have been made lawful for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. This injunction includes all the women of his "father's family and of his mother's family". And this rule is, though, applicable to all Muslims in general, yet in the case of the Holy Prophet ﷺ it has been subjected to a condition imposed on him exclusively that they must have migrated with him from Makkah- not necessarily in his company or at the same time, but the words, "with you" are to denote that they should have migrated at any time in accordance with his command. If any of them did not migrate for any reason, they did not become lawful for him as was the case with Umm Hani' رضى الله عنها, the daughter of his paternal uncle Abū Ṭālib who, as per her statement, was not lawful for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, because she did not migrate from Makkah.

Migration being the condition of lawfulness for the Holy Prophet ﷺ was only with regard to the women of his parent's family. This condition was not applicable to other women in general - their being Muslim was enough. The wisdom in applying this condition of migration for the women of his parent's family was perhaps that the women of the family

are proud of their family which is unbecoming for the wife of a prophet. This propensity was taken care of by imposing the condition of migration, because only that women would migrate whose love for Allah and His Messenger ﷺ prevails over her love for her family, home and property. Also, one has to suffer great difficulties during migration and these sufferings in the way of Allah have a special place in ones spiritual reform.

#### Fourth Injunction:

وَأَمْرًا مُمُؤْمِنَةً إِنْ وَهَبَتْ نَفْسَهَا لِلنَّبِيِّ إِنْ أَرَادَ النَّبِيُّ أَنْ يَسْتَنْكِحَهَا خَالِصَةً لَكَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"And a believing woman who offers herself for (marrying) the prophet without dower if the prophet wishes to bring her into his marriage, these rules being exclusive for you, and not for the (rest of the) believers". (33:50)

The exclusiveness of this exception for the Holy Prophet ﷺ is absolutely obvious, because dower is an essential condition for the marriage of common Muslims, so much so that if, at the time of marriage, the woman says that she does not want any dower or the man says that he will not pay any dower, even this mutual agreement is considered by Shari'ah as null and void, and dower as prevalent in their families would become compulsory. Only the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been exclusively permitted to marry without dower when the woman is desirous of marriage with him without dower.

Scholars differ in determining whether the Holy Prophet ﷺ did actually marry a woman without dower who offered herself for marriage without dower. Some scholars say that marriage of the Holy Prophet ﷺ with a woman in this way is not proved, whereas some others have proved some such marriages (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

Some scholars have considered the sentence خَالِصَةً لَكَ (exclusively for you) to be specific to the fourth injunction, whereas some other commentators like Zamkshshri, etc., have applied it to all the injunctions mentioned before it, meaning that all the above mentioned rules are exclusively for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. And at the end it is stated لِكَيْلَا يَكُونَ عَلَيْكَ حَرَجٌ which means that these injunctions have been made exclusive for the Holy Prophet ﷺ to save him from any difficulty. Of these

exclusive rules mentioned above, the first rule wherein more than four wives have been allowed for him and the fourth rule that marriage without dower has been made lawful for him are obviously meant to facilitate and remove difficulties; but the second, third and fifth rules apparently add more conditions which should increase difficulty. But this is a hint that despite these conditions being apparently more strict, they are, in fact, for his good because in their absence he would have suffered from mental anguish. As such, even the additional conditions are to remove his difficulty.

### Fifth Injunction:

The fifth injunction deduced from the words "believing women" in the above verses is that unlike the common Muslims who can marry the Christian or Jewish women, it is not permissible for the Holy Prophet ﷺ to marry them. It is necessary for him that his wives are Muslims.

After stating the exclusiveness of the five rules for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the Holy Qur'ān has briefly mentioned the rule for Muslims in general:

قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا فَرَضْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِي أَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ

"We know what We have prescribed for them in respect of their wives and the slave girls they own" - 50.

It means that the above mentioned rules are exclusive for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but as for the marriage of other Muslims, Allah Knows what He has prescribed for them. For example, no Muslim can marry a woman without dower and a Muslim is allowed to marry a Christian or a Jewish woman. Similarly, the conditions in the previous rules determined to be obligatory for the Holy Prophet ﷺ are not applicable to other Muslims.

Towards the end, it is said, لِكَيْلَا يَكُونَ عَلَيْكَ حَرَجٌ (so that there should be no difficulty for you - 50). It means that these special injunctions in the matter of *nikāh* for the Holy Prophet ﷺ were prescribed so that he does not face any difficulty. As for the restrictions and conditions imposed on the Holy Prophet ﷺ and not on other Muslims which appear to be difficult, but keeping in view the expedience and wisdom under which the restrictions were placed, those restrictions were, in fact, to remove the spiritual discomfort and embarrassment.

So far five rules of marriage have been enunciated which have some exclusiveness for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Further on two rules have been stated which are related to the above five rules.

### Sixth Injunctions

تُرْجَى مِنْ نَشَاءِ مِنْهُنَّ وَتَوَى إِلَيْكَ مِنْ نَشَاءِ ("You may postpone (the turn) of any one you wish from among them, and may accommodate with you any one you wish." - 51) This rule is specific to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The normal rule is that a Muslim husband having more than one wife must distribute his nights between his wives in equal numbers and similarly must provide means of sustenance and maintenance to each one of them equally. It is not permissible to violate the principle of equality. But the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been exempted from this rule and has been allowed to postpone the turn of any one of his blessed wives according to his own expedience; he could also recall the one whose turn he had postponed earlier.

Allah Almighty so honored the Holy Prophet ﷺ that he was exempted from observing equality between his wives but the Holy Prophet ﷺ never availed of this concession in practice; he always maintained full equality between all his blessed wives. Imām Abū Bakr al-Jassas has stated that as per narrations of Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet ﷺ always maintained equality between the blessed wives even after the revelation of this verse; he goes on to a Ḥadīth from Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها, with his own chain of narrators, which is also available in Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhī, Nasa'I, Abū Dāwūd etc.:

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقْسِمُ فَيَعْدِلُ فَيَقُولُ: اللَّهُمَّ هَذَا قَسْمِي فِيمَا أَمْلِكُ فَلَا تَلْمَنِي فِيمَا لَا أَمْلِكُ قَالَ أَبُو دَاوُدَ يَعْنِي الْقَلْبَ

"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to maintain equality between all wives and used to supplicate, "O Allah I have maintained equality in whatever is within my power (meaning provision of means of sustenance and in spending of nights), so do not reprove me for that which is not within my power (meaning love and affection being more for someone and less for another that is not within one's control).

According to another narration, also from Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها and reported by Bukhārī, if the Holy Prophet ﷺ had to postpone his visit to any of the blessed wives at her turn, for some reason, he would seek her permission even after the revelation of this verse wherein he was

exempted from observing equality between his blessed wives.

Another Ḥadīth is also well known and is found in all books of Ḥadīth that when it became difficult for the Holy Prophet ﷺ during his last illness to move between the houses of his blessed wives on daily basis, he sought permission from all of them before staying in the house of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها where he passed the remaining days of his illness.

It was the habit of all the prophets in general, and that of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in particular, that whenever a concession was given to them by Allah Ta'ālā in a rule of Sharī'ah, they generally used to act upon the original rule as a demonstration of their gratitude to Allah, and did not avail of the concession except at a time of a dire need.

### The wisdom of Sixth Injunction

The Holy Qur'an has then stated the wisdom of the sixth injunction i.e. exempting the Holy Prophet ﷺ from maintaining equality between his wives and making all options open for him in this regard. In the words of the Holy Qur'an the wisdom behind this exemption was the following, ذَلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَنْ تَقْرَءَ أَعْيُنُهُنَّ وَلَا يَحْزَنَّ وَيَرْضَيْنَ (it is more likely, in this way, that their eyes will stay content, and they will not grieve, and all of them will be happy with whatever you give to them. - 51)

A doubt may arise here that, apparently, this rule of exemption would be against the wishes and intent of the blessed wives رضى الله عنهن and may cause them anguish; how can it be considered to be a source of their happiness? In answer to this question, one has to bear in mind that the real reason for one's grievance is one's perception of his or her due rights. If one believes that a certain right is due on somebody and he is neglecting or violating it, then one feels hurt and aggrieved. But if somebody who does not owe us anything and still gives us something, this act of kindness generates sheer pleasure. Accordingly, when it has been stated that it is not obligatory upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ to observe equality among all the blessed wives رضى الله عنهن rather he may use his discretion, then whatever attention and company a wife gets from him would be considered a favor and an act of courtesy and kindness which would be a source of happiness and satisfaction.

At the end of this injunction the Holy Qur'an has declared:

وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَلِيمًا

"And Allah knows whatever lies in your hearts. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise." - 51

The context of the foregoing and forthcoming verses is the mention of the rules peculiar to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the matter of marriage. In between these rules, the statement that Allah knows whatever lies in your hearts and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise does not appear to bear any nexus with the subject. It is stated in Rūḥ ul-Ma‘ānī that the permission given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ to marry more than four wives or to marry without dower could have created satanic scruples in somebody's mind. So, this verse, coming in between, has directed that Muslims have to guard themselves against such suspicions and scruples and have to firm up their faith that all these exclusive exemptions are given by Allah Almighty on the basis of His infinite wisdom and expedience, and that the selfish desires have no room here.

### **The pious life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the issue of polygamy**

The enemies of Islam have always targeted the issue of polygamy, specially the number of the wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ for their criticism. But if the whole life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is kept in view, even the Satan cannot find scope to cast doubts on the character of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is a proved fact that his first marriage at the age of twenty-five was with Sayyidah Khadijah رضى الله عنها who was an aged widow with children and had been married twice before. The Holy Prophet ﷺ spent his whole prime of life, upto the age of fifty, with that aged wife only. All these fifty years were spent right before the eyes of the people of Makkah who had started his opposition when he was of forty years and had announced his prophethood. His opponents did not leave any stone unturned in harassing and stigmatizing him. They called him a magician, a poet, a mad man, but no enemy could ever find a single chance to cast doubts in his piety, modesty or purity.

At the age of fifty, after the death of Sayyidah Khadijah, he married Sayyidah Sawdah رضى الله عنها who was also a widow.

After migration to Madinah, at the age of fifty-four, in the second year of Hijrah, Sayyidah ‘Āishah رضى الله عنها came to the Holy Prophet's home as wife. He married Sayyidah Hafsa رضى الله عنها a year later and

Sayyidah Zainab bint Khuzaymah رضى الله عنها a few days after that, who expired a few months later. He married Sayyidah Umm Salamah رضى الله عنها, a widow with children, in the year 4 of Hijrah. In the year 5 when he was fifty eight years old, he married Sayyidah Zainab bint Jahsh رضى الله عنها in accordance with Allah's order, as detailed in the beginning of the present surah. The rest of the blessed wives entered his house in the last five years.

The rules pertaining to the private life of a prophet and his domestic affairs constitute a major portion of a religion. The contribution of these nine blessed wives رضى الله عنهما to the propagation and education of Islam can be imagined from the fact that Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها alone narrated two thousand two hundred and ten *aḥādīth* and Sayyidah Umm Salamah رضى الله عنها narrated three hundred and sixty-eight *aḥādīth* which have been collected in reliable books. Hafiz Ibn al-Qayyim, in his *I'lmul Muwaqqi'in*, has commented that the rulings of Shari'ah (fatawa) disclosed by Sayyidah Umm Salamah رضى الله عنها would constitute a separate book. More than two hundred noble companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ were disciples of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها who learnt *ḥadīth*, *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and fatawa from her.

Another wisdom of bringing a number of the blessed wives رضى الله عنهما to the house of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was to attract their clans towards Islam. After keeping these facts in view and considering the general pattern of his pure life, can one find any scope for saying that the multiplicity of his wives was, Allah forbid, to fulfill selfish or sexual desires? If this was the case, why the last stage of life would have been selected for this purpose after spending the whole prime of life either in celibacy or with an aged widow. This subject along with the religious, intellectual, biological and economic issues of the polygamy has been thoroughly discussed with full details under the explanation of the third verse of Sūrah Nisa' in volume II of this book.

### Seventh Injunction:

لَا يَجِلُّ لَكَ النِّسَاءُ مِنْ بَعْدُ وَلَا أَنْ تَبَدَّلَ بِهِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ حُسْنُهُنَّ

(No women are lawful for you after this, nor is it lawful that you replace them (the present wives) with other wives, even though their goodness may attract you. - 52),

The words "مِنْ بَعْدُ" after this" in this verse may be interpreted in two ways. One is that no women are lawful for you after the present wives. Some noble companions رضي الله عنهم and leading commentators have adopted this meaning. Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه has stated that when the blessed wives رضي الله عنهن were given the choice by Allah Ta'ālā to either opt for the pleasure of the worldly life and its charms but separation from the Holy Prophet ﷺ or to remain with him and be content with every economic condition they may face, all of them gave up their demand for increase in maintenance and elected to remain with him. Allah Ta'ālā, as a reward for their decision, restricted the Holy Prophet ﷺ to those nine wives and it was no more permissible for him to marry other women. (Al-Baihaqi, as quoted by Rūḥ-ul- Ma'ānī)

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه has stated that Allah Ta'ālā has restricted the blessed wives رضي الله عنهن exclusively to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in that they could not marry anybody after him. Similarly, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been restricted to the blessed wives in the sense that he could not marry any other women. Sayyidnā 'Ikrimah has also given this explanation as per one narration.

The second interpretation of these words, as reported by different authorities, like Ibn 'Abbās, 'Ikrimah and Mujahid, according to some narrations is that "مِنْ بَعْدُ" after this" means it is not lawful for the Holy Prophet ﷺ to marry any women beyond the categories mentioned in the earlier verse. For example, the earlier verse has allowed for him only those women of his parents' families who had migrated from Makkah to Madinah either with him or later, according to his command; similarly the restriction that his wife must be a Muslim has made the Christian or Jewish women unlawful for him. As such the meaning of the words, "after this" would be that he cannot marry those women who do not fall in the categories made lawful for him. Thus, according to this explanation, this is not a new injunction; it is rather an elaboration to highlight the consequential outcome of the rule already laid down in the preceding verse. According to this interpretation, this verse does not prohibit marriage with other women after the nine blessed wives رضي الله عنهن; instead, it prohibits marriage with non-Muslims and with women of the parents families who did not migrate, as already known from the previous verse.

This second interpretation finds support from a narration of Sayyidah 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها to the effect that the permission of further marriages remained applicable for him (even after the revelation of the present verse)

"Nor is it lawful that you replace them (the present wives) with other wives" - 52.

The clear meaning of these words in view of the second explanation of this verse is that although the Holy Prophet ﷺ is permitted to marry other women besides his present wives subject to the conditions mentioned, yet it is not lawful for him to divorce a wife and to marry another woman to replace her.

However, the meaning of these words in view of the first explanation of this verse would be that he can neither marry any woman in addition to the present wives, nor can he replace them by divorcing one and marrying another.

Towards the end of these verses it is clarified that a bond woman owned by the Holy Prophet ﷺ is exempt from fifth and seventh rules in the sense that she is lawful for him, even if she is a Christian or Jew, and it is also permitted for him to replace her with another bondwoman. Lastly it has been reminded that Allah Ta'ālā is watchful of everything's reality, appearance and underlying reasons. All these injunctions and rules are based on divine wisdom and expedience, even if the wisdom is not stated specifically, and hence no one has the right to question them or raise objections against them.

### Verses 53 - 55

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ إِلَى  
طَعَامٍ غَيْرِ نَظِيرِينَ إِنَّهُ لَا وَلَكِنْ إِذَا دُعِيتُمْ فَادْخُلُوا فَإِذَا طَعِمْتُمْ  
فَانتَشِرُوا وَلَا مُسْتَأْنِسِينَ لِحَدِيثٍ ۗ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ كَانَ يُؤْذَى النَّبِيَّ  
فَيَسْتَحِي مِنْكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَسْتَحِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ ۗ وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعًا

فَسَعَلُوهُنَّ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ ۖ ذَلِكُمْ أَطْهَرُ لِقُلُوبِكُمْ وَقُلُوبِهِنَّ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَنْ تَنْكِحُوا أَزْوَاجَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَبَدًا ۗ إِنَّ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمًا ﴿٥٣﴾ إِنْ تُبَدُّوا شَيْئًا أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ﴿٥٤﴾ لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِنَّ فِي آبَائِهِنَّ وَلَا أَبْنَائِهِنَّ وَلَا إِخْوَانِهِنَّ وَلَا أَبْنَاءَ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ وَلَا أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ وَلَا نِسَائِهِنَّ وَلَا مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ ۚ وَاتَّقِينَ اللَّهَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدًا ﴿٥٥﴾

O those who believe, do not enter the houses of the Prophet, unless you are permitted for a meal, not (so early as) to wait for its preparation. But when you are invited, go inside. Then, once you have had the meal, then disperse, and (do) not (sit for long) being keen for a chat. This (conduct of yours) hurts the Prophet, but he feels shy of (telling) you (about it). And Allah is not shy of the truth. And when you ask any thing from them (the blessed wives of the Prophet), ask them from behind a curtain. That is better for the purity of your hearts and their hearts. And it is not allowed for you that you hurt Allah's Messenger, nor that you ever marry his wives after him. Indeed, it would be an enormity in the sight of Allah. [53] If you disclose any thing, or conceal it, Allah is All-Knowing about every thing. [54] There is no sin for them (the wives of the Prophet) in (appearing without *hijāb* before) their fathers, or their brothers, or the sons of their brothers, or the sons of their sisters, or their own (Muslim) women, or their slave-girls. And (O wives of the Prophet,) fear Allah. Surely, Allah is witness to every thing. [55]

### Commentary

These verses have laid down some etiquettes and rules of Islamic social behavior. The reason for mentioning them in the context of the previous verses is that these rules were initially revealed for the Holy Prophet's household and his wives, although their applicability is not specific or exclusive to him.

## The First Injunction

### Etiquettes for hosts and guests

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ إِلَى طَعَامٍ غَيْرٍ نَظِيرِينَ إِنَّهُ  
وَلَكِنْ إِذَا دُعِيتُمْ فَادْخُلُوا فَإِذَا طَعِمْتُمْ فَانْتَشِرُوا وَلَا مُسْتَأْنِسِينَ لِحَدِيثٍ

(O those who believe, do not enter the houses of the Prophet, unless you are permitted for a meal, not (so early as) to wait for its preparation. But when you are invited, go inside. Then, once you have had the meal, then disperse, and (do) not (sit for long) being keen for a chat. This (conduct of yours) hurts the Prophet, but he feels shy of (telling) you (about it). And Allah is not shy of the truth). (33:53)

This verse has laid down three rules pertaining to a situation where a person is invited to have meal in someone's house. These rules are applicable to all Muslims in general, but since they were prompted by an incident which took place in the house of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, therefore the Prophet's ﷺ house has been mentioned in the text.

The first rule is: "لا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ" "Do not enter the houses of the Prophet, unless you are permitted.."

The second etiquette is that despite invitation to dine and permission to enter the house, one should not enter the house so early as to wait for the meal's preparation; rather he should go inside the house when he is invited to do so.

The third etiquette is that once the invitees have had the meal, they should disperse and should not sit for long being keen for a chat. This direction is restricted to the general cases where guests' sitting for long after having the meal causes inconvenience to the host, either because the host wants to get busy with his own work, or because he has to serve meals to others after these guests. But where the practice and norm is that the guests remaining busy in conversation till late after they had their meals does not pose any problem for the hosts, as it has become customary in dinners and parties these days, this rule would not apply, because the next sentence of the verse has specifically highlighted the reason of this rule where it is said that this behavior brings discomfort to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In the specific incident that was the cause of the revelation of this verse, the meals were served in the ladies apartments of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the discomfort caused to the family members

because of the guests staying till late is obvious.

The verse also states that although such behavior of the guests hurts the Holy Prophet ﷺ, yet since they are his own guests, he feels shy of telling and educating them about it, but Allah Ta'ālā is not shy of telling them the truth.

The above sentence of the verse also tells us the extent to which a host is required to show respect and give honor and regard to his guests, because despite the fact that it was one of the obligations of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to teach people how they should behave when they are invited as guests, he postponed to teach his own guests this etiquette (lest they should feel disgraced) till Allah Ta'ālā Himself taught this etiquette in the Qur'ān.

### The Second Injunction - Ḥijāb for Women

وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعًا فَسْأَلُوهُنَّ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ ذَلِكُمْ أَطْهَرُ لِقُلُوبِكُمْ وَقُلُوبِهِنَّ

And when you ask any thing from them (the blessed wives of the Prophet), ask them from behind a curtain. That is better for the purity of your hearts and their hearts. (33:53)

This rule has also been prompted by a particular incident involving the blessed wives ﷺ, but the rule is general for the whole Ummah. Briefly, the rule states that if non-*mahram* men have to ask anything of common use from women, they should ask them from behind a curtain - not face to face. The reason stated for this rule is that it is better for the purity of the hearts of both.

### The special Importance of Women's Ḥijāb

It is worth noting here that the men and women who are the direct addressees of these rules of ḥijāb are, on the one hand, the women who are the blessed wives رضي الله عنهما of the Holy Prophet ﷺ the purification of whose hearts has been undertaken by Allah Ta'ālā Himself as mentioned in the verse preceding the present one, and on the other hand they are the men who are the noble companions ﷺ of the Holy Prophet ﷺ many of whom have been exalted even above angels. Despite all these credentials, *ḥijāb* was deemed to be necessary between men and women for the purity of their hearts and to protect them from sensual scruples. Who can claim that his inner-self is purer than those of the noble companions ﷺ and the inner-selves of his women are purer than those of

the blessed wives رضى الله عنهن and thus believe that mixing of men and women would not have any bad consequences?

### The Background of the revelation of these verses

Different incidents have been related by the commentators as the background for the revelation of the these verses. But there is no contradiction between these narrations, because it is likely that all these incidents combined together constitute the reason for the revelation. As for the first verse which lays down the etiquettes of guests, its background is mentioned by Sulaymān Ibn Arqam, as reported by Ibn Abī Hatim, that it was revealed about some boorish people who would enter a house without being invited and keep waiting there for the preparation of a meal.

And Imām 'Abd Ibn Ḥumaid has reported the statement of Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه that this verse was revealed about some people who would look for an opportunity to enter and sit in the Holy Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم house well before the time of dining, remain busy in conversation between themselves till the preparation of the meal and then would join the dining. These incidents took place before the injunction of *ḥijāb* when men used to enter women's apartments.

As for the second rule relating to the *ḥijāb* of women, Imām Bukhari has cited two narrations about the reason for its revelation. One is narrated by Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه that Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه said to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, "O Messenger of Allah ! you are visited by all sorts of people, and as such it appears advisable that you order your blessed wives رضى الله عنهن to observe *Hijāb*". At this, the verse of *ḥijāb* was revealed.

Imām Bukhari and Imām Muslim both have reported the following statement of Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه :

وافقت ربي في ثلث: قلت يا رسول الله! لو اتخذت في مقام إبراهيم مصلًى، فأنزل الله تعالى واتخذوا من مقام إبراهيم مصلًى وقلت: يا رسول الله! إن نساءك يدخلن عليهن البر والفاجر فلو حجبتهن فأنزل الله آية الحجاب وقلت لأزواج النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم لما تمالأن عليه في الغيرة عسى ربه إن طلقكن أن يبدلهن أزواجاً خيراً منكن، فنزلت كذلك

"My opinion appeared to be in consonance with my Lord in three things. One is that I asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ to adopt the Station of Ibrāhīm (Maqām Ibrāhīm) as the place of your prayers (Ṣalāh). Then Allah Ta'ālā revealed the verse *وَاتَّخِذُوا مِنْ مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى* (And take the Station of Ibrāhīm as a place of prayer). And I said to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that all sorts of good and bad people appear before your blessed wives *رضى الله عنهن* ; it would be better if you ask them to observe *ḥijāb*. Then the verse of *ḥijāb* was revealed. And when the blessed wives *رضى الله عنهن* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ developed envy between themselves, I told them that if the Messenger of Allah ﷺ divorces you, it is not unlikely that Allah Ta'ālā may provide him wives better than you. So Qur'an was revealed in the same very words."

Sayyidnā 'Umar's respectful speech is worth noting that instead of saying that his Lord accorded with him in three things, he said that his opinion was found to be in consonance with Him in three things.

Another narration reported in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī, also from Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه is that he said:

"I know the facts about the verse of *ḥijāb* more than anybody else, because I was present when Sayyidah Zainab bint Jahsh *رضى الله عنها*, after her marriage with the Holy Prophet ﷺ, entered his house and was present in the house with him, when some of the people whom he had invited for *walimah* (the dining arranged after consummation of marriage) which he ﷺ had got prepared for them, just kept sitting there and talking. The narration in Tirmidhī adds that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was also present there along with Sayyidah Zainab *رضى الله عنهن* and she had turned her face towards the wall due to modesty. The Holy Prophet ﷺ was displeased by the people sitting there so long; he went out of the house to meet and greet other blessed wives *رضى الله عنهن*. When he came back, they were still there. And then they realized and dispersed. The Holy Prophet entered the house, but came out after a little while. I was present there. He recited this verse of *ḥijāb* which had been revealed just at that time.

The narrations of Ḥadīth mention these three incidents as the causes for the revelation of the verses of *ḥijāb*. There is no contradiction between them, because possibly all the three incidents combined together constitute the cumulative cause of the revelation of these verses.

### The Third Injunction

وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَنْ تُنكِحُوا أَزْوَاجَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَبَدًا ("And it is not allowed for you that you hurt Allah's Messenger, nor that you ever marry his wives after him".) (33:53)

The first part of this verse has declared all such utterances and actions unlawful (*ḥarām*) which cause anguish or hurt to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Then it is laid down that no one can marry his blessed wives *رضى الله عنهن* after him.

All the rules mentioned in this verse are though addressed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ or his blessed wives *رضى الله عنهن*, their application is general for the whole Ummah, except this last rule which is specific to the blessed wives *رضى الله عنهن* that they cannot marry any one after him, while the rule for the Ummah in general is that after the death of the husband, his wife can marry another person after the expiry of the period of *iddah*. The reason may be that according to Qur'ān, the blessed wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ are mothers of the Muslims, and although their being mothers does not affect their spiritual offspring in the sense that, being brothers and sisters, they would not be able to marry each other, yet their motherhood was limited to their own-selves in the sense that they cannot marry anyone.

It may also be said that they Holy Prophet ﷺ is alive in his honored grave, his *رضى الله عنهن* expiry being like a husband missing from his home. That is why his inheritance was not distributed, and that is why his blessed wives *رضى الله عنهن* were not in the same situation as that of the wives of common men after the death of their husbands.

Another reason for this injunction is that according to the rule of Shari'ah, every woman in Paradise would be with her last husband. Sayyidnā Hudhaifah *رضى الله عنه* had told his wife at his death that if you wish to be my wife in Paradise, do not marry any one after me because in Paradise, a woman would go to her last husband. (Qurtubī)

So, the honor that Allah Ta'ālā had bestowed upon the blessed wives *رضى الله عنهن* in this world was thus preserved for them in paradise also by forbidding their marriage to anyone after him.

Besides, no husband naturally likes that his wife should marry

anyone, but for common people, the Shari'ah did not make it necessary to fulfill this desire. Allah Ta'ālā, by respecting this natural desire of the Holy Prophet ﷺ bestowed an exclusive honour upon him.

There is a consensus in the Ummah that the above rules apply to all the blessed wives رضى الله عنهن who remained in the bond of marriage with the Holy Prophet ﷺ till his expiry. However there are different views about whether or not this rule is applicable to those of his wives who were either divorced by him or who separated from him for some other reason. Qurtubī has detailed these views.

إِنَّ ذَلِكَ كَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمًا (Indeed, it would be an enormity in the sight of Allah - 53). It means that causing any harm to or to hurt the Holy Prophet ﷺ in any way or to marry his wives after him would be an enormity in the eyes of Allah.

إِنْ تُبْدُوا شَيْئًا أَوْ تَخْفَوْهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا (If you disclose any thing, or conceal it, Allah is All-Knowing about every thing - 33:54). It has been repeated again in this verse that Allah Ta'ālā knows even the intents and thoughts hidden in the hearts. So whether you disclose or conceal, Allah Ta'ālā knows it all. What is being emphasized here is that one should not let any doubt or suspicion enter one's mind or heart about the above-stated rules, and must avoid any violation of these rules.

The issue of Hijāb for women, out of the three injunctions in the above mentioned verse, needs some further elaboration which is being given below.

## Injunctions of Hijāb

### And the Islamic system for prevention of misdeeds

Immodesty, adultery and the overtures leading to them are some of those destructive evils of this world which do not only affect the individuals, but also ruin families and tribes, and sometimes destroy large countries as well. If the cases of murder and plunder in this world are thoroughly investigated, sexual emotions would be found behind the scenes. This is the reason that ever since this world came into existence, there has been no nation, religion or region that has not unanimously believed in the evil and destructive nature of these misdeeds.

The European nations in the present age, after doing away with the religions limits and breaking away from their ancient and entrenched customs and traditions, do not consider adultery a crime in itself and they have moulded their culture and society in such a fashion that sexual anarchy and immodest acts are permitted freely, but even they could not exclude the consequences of these evil acts from the list of the crimes - prostitution, rape and obscenities in public had to be declared punishable offences.

This is really comparable to somebody collecting inflammables, sprinkling oil on them, then setting them on fire and when it bursts into flames, then prohibiting the flames and taking measures to stop them. Another example would be to kindle a fire under a cooking pot and then try to stop it from steaming and boiling.

Islam, on the other hand, when declares some harmful acts as punishable offences, it also imposes restrictions on the overtures leading to them and declares them forbidden also. In the present case the real objective was to prevent adultery and fornication. So the start was made by the rule to keep one's eyes down, by preventing free mixing of men and women, by directing women to stay inside the four walls of houses; by requiring women to cover their bodies from head to feet by means of a covering dress called '*burqa*' or simply by a longish shawl when they have to go out due to some need, and to walk on the side of the street and not to wear perfume or to wear a ringing ornament when going out. If someone crosses all these limits, breaks all these barriers and defies all the restrictions to do what is forbidden, then the punishment is so severe and terrifying that once it is given to some adulterer or fornicator, the whole nation would learn an unforgettable lesson.

The Europeans and their camp-followers have put forward arguments justifying their obscenities by trying to prove the *ḥijāb* for women to be harmful for the society in regard to women's health, economic and social status and by trying to prove the benefits for women being without *ḥijāb*. Their detailed rejoinder has been given by many modern scholars in their books. Here it would be adequate to understand that no crime or sin is devoid of some gain or benefit. Even stealing, robbery, cheating are very profitable in some respects. But when the destructive harms that take place as a result and consequence of these acts come to view, nobody

dares to call them profitable businesses. The absence of *ḥijāb* for women, even if it has economic gains, cannot be called beneficial by sensible and wise people when it engulfs the whole nation and the country in mischief and disorder.

### **The Golden Islamic Principle of Barring the Ways and Means for Prevention of Crimes in a moderate manner**

Just as the basic principles of faith, like belief in the Oneness of Allah, the prophethood and in the life Hereafter are common to the religious systems of all the prophets, similarly crimes, obscenities and evil deeds have been held unlawful (*ḥarām*) in all revealed laws and divine religions. But in the previous religions and their laws, the ways and means which led to the violations were not declared absolutely unlawful in themselves, unless a crime or sin was committed through them. But since the Shari'ah of Islam has to be in force till the Doomsday, it has been safeguarded by Allah Ta'ālā specially in that not only the crimes and sins but even their causes and means that normally lead one to those crimes and sins have been declared unlawful themselves. For example, when drinking was forbidden, the processing, selling purchasing and presentation of alcoholic drinks was also forbidden. Similarly when interest and usury was forbidden, then all affairs involving interest or resembling usury were also declared unlawful. That is why the Islamic jurists have declared all profits derived from invalid businesses to be filthy earning like interest. To associate any being with Allah Ta'ālā (Shirk) and idolatry have been declared by Qur'ān to be the greatest injustice and unpardonable sins, so severe prohibitions have been placed on their causes and means also. Since the polytheists (*mushrikin*) used to worship the sun at sunrise, sunset and at midday, saying of prayers (Ṣalah) in those particular times would bear a resemblance to sun worshipers and this resemblance itself could lead to 'Shirk', therefore the revealed laws declared even saying of prayers (Ṣalah) and prostration (Sajdah) to be unlawful (Ḥarām) in those times. Statues and pictures of idols are very close to idolatry, so sculpturing of idol's statues and making of their pictures is forbidden and their usage is not permissible.

Similarly while forbidding adultery, all its immediate causes and means have also been declared unlawful by Shari'ah. To look at any boy or woman with sexual lust is held as a fornication through the eyes, to

hear their speech with that intent is held as fornication through the ears, to touch them as fornication through the hands and to walk in their pursuit as fornication through the feet, as recorded in authentic Ḥadīth. The injunctions of *ḥijāb* for women were revealed to safeguard one against these very sins.

But there is a very long list of causes and means - immediate and distant. if even the distant causes of a sinful act are forbidden, life would become very difficult and considerable difficulty would be faced in carrying out day-to-day affairs which is against the nature of this religion. The Holy Qur'ān's open declaration in this matter is: مَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ . It means that no difficulty has been placed on you in religion. Therefore, in the matter of causes and means, it was wisely decided that those acts and deeds which are such immediate causes of any sin that, generally, one who commits them does necessarily get involved in that sin, have been annexed with the real sin and forbidden as well. If one commits some acts and deeds that are distant causes of a sin and do not necessarily involve one generally in that sin, but they do have some share in the involvement in it, they have been declared reprehensible (makruh). Those causes which are even farther away from involving one in a sin, and which cause one's involvement in very rare cases, they have been considered permissible.

An example of the first case is selling of alcoholic drinks which has been declared as unlawful as drinking itself, because it is an immediate means of drinking. Similarly touching a non-mahram woman, although not fornication in itself, but since it is an immediate cause and means for it, it has also been declared unlawful like the fornication is unlawful.

An example of the second case would be selling of grapes to a person about whom it is known that he would make wine out of the grapes, either because he is a wine maker by profession or because he has clearly said that this is his purpose for its purchase. This is not unlawful in the same way as selling of alcoholic drinks, but this is reprehensible and not permissible. The same rule applies to renting out land or building for a cinema house or an interest-based bank that if it was known at the time of finalizing the deal or contract that the purpose of living for rent is not permissible, then renting would be Makruh Taḥrīmī (reprehensible bordering on being unlawful).

An example of the third case would be selling of grapes to the common public. While it is possible that anyone of them might make wine out of the grapes, but neither has anyone said that he will do so, nor is it in the seller's knowledge that anyone makes wine, such sale and purchase has been considered permissible under the rules.

### Important Caution

It is important to note that all those acts and deeds which have been declared unlawful by the rules because they are immediate causes or means of involving one in sin, all of them are absolutely unlawful now after the injunction, irrespective of whether these acts involved one in sin or not; their being unlawful is itself a permanent rule of the religion and its violation is impermissible.

It is easier to understand, after this introductory explanation that *ḥijāb* for women is also based upon this principle of barring the ways and means of a sin that leads to getting involved in sin. Here also the rules for the three categories of causes aforementioned would apply. For example, a young woman's uncovering her body in front of a young man is such an immediate cause of commission of sin that as per general nature of men and women, this act would almost certainly lead to commission of sin. Therefore the rules declare it to be forbidden just as fornication is forbidden. Now that this act has been ruled to be the same as fornication, it is absolutely prohibited, even if the person involved is innocent or he is positive that he would not commit the further sin because he has control over himself. The exemption of the circumstances of necessity, medical treatment, etc. do not effect its being forbidden. Even the change of times and ages do not affect it because the rule is just as applicable today in these times of evil and adultery as it was in the first period of Islam.

The second category of the causes would be that women step out of the four walls of their houses wearing *burqa'* (dress which covers from head to feet) or a longish shawl to cover their bodies completely from head to feet. This is a distant cause of *fitnah* (mischief). The rule in this case is that if doing so would cause *fitnah*, then it is not permissible but if there is no apprehension of *fitnah* in doing so, then it is permissible. Therefore this rule is subject to change depending upon circumstances and times. Such outings of women were not cause of mischief during the period of

the Holy Prophet ﷺ. That is why he had given permission to women to go to mosques after having covered themselves completely from head to feet, subject to certain conditions and he had forbidden people from preventing women from going to mosques. Even at that time, although women were being persuaded to offer their prayers in their own homes, because, for them, the reward of offering prayers in their homes is greater than the reward of offering their prayers in mosques, but they were not disallowed from saying their prayers in mosques because there was no apprehension of *fitnah*. The noble companions ؓ, after the expiry of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, realized that going of women to mosques, even if they are covered from head to feet, was no longer free from apprehension of *fitnah*, so they evolved a consensus among themselves and stopped women from joining the congregation in mosques. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها stated that if the Holy Prophet ﷺ could see the circumstances prevailing today, he would, most certainly, have stopped women from going to mosques. This tells us that the decision of the noble companions was no different from that of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, rather the rule itself changed according to the change in conditions as laid down by the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The rules regarding Ḥijāb for women have been stated in seven verses of the Holy Qur'ān - three in Sūrah An-Nūr earlier, four in Sūrah Al-Aḥzab out of which one is mentioned earlier, the second is under review and the other two would come later, wherein the determination of the category of Ḥijāb, details of the rules and the exemptions have been stated in detail. Similarly, in more than seventy *aḥādīth* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the verbal and practical orders of Ḥijāb have been stated. All these injunctions, rules and regulations have been collected by the author in a booklet titled "Tafsilul Khitāb fī Tafsīrī 'Āyat- il-ḥijāb" in Arabic language, already published as a part of Sūrah Al-Aḥzab in "Aḥkām- ul Qur'ān", some important extracts of which are being reproduced below.

## The Advent of Ḥijāb in Historical Perspective

Free mixing among men and women has never been considered appropriate in the entire history of the world from Sayyidnā 'Ādam ؑ to the last prophet, Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ, and it is no peculiarity of the people following religious codes; in fact, such mixing has not been held as proper in good families universally.

At the time when Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ was traveling through Madyan, two women are mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān who were standing aside, holding their flock of goats while waiting for their turn to take these to the water trough. The reason given for this is no other but that these women did not like to push and shove into the crowd of men, instead, preferred to remain content with whatever water was left. The first verse of Ḥijāb was revealed at the time of the marriage of Sayyidah Zainab bint Jahsh رضى الله عنها. Even before its revelation, a narration appearing in the Jami' of Tirmidhī describes the position in which she was sitting in the house: وَهِيَ مُوَلِّئَةٌ وَجْهَهَا إِلَى الْحَائِطِ (and she was [sitting] with her face turned towards the wall).

This tells us that, even before the revelation relating to Ḥijāb, the custom of free mixing among men and women, no-holds-barred dates, rendezvous, get-togethers and chats did not exist among good people anywhere. The First Age of Ignorance marked by personal display (*tabarruj*) by its women referred to in the Qur'ān was something peculiar to bondwomen and women of loose character - certainly, not in good families of Arabia. They saw it as low and reprehensible. The whole history of Arabia bears testimony to this. In India, among the adherents of Hindu, Buddhist and other polytheistic faiths, free mixing between men and women was not tolerated. All those claims of working with men shoulder to shoulder, parading in bazaars and streets, free mixing of men and women in almost every department of life and the chain of intimate contacts in parties and clubs are the product of immodesty and obscenity among Europeans - a disease they too have been afflicted with after having veered away from their past. In those earlier days of theirs, they too were no victims of this situation they are in. Allah Ta'ālā has created women physically different from men. Similarly, He has also placed in their temperaments the essential ingredient of natural modesty which automatically inclines them to maintain a certain aloofness from the general run of men and to remain properly covered. This screen of natural and temperamental modesty has always been present there between women and men since the very beginning. In the early period of Islam too, the mutually imposed absence of free mixing - a forerunner of the Ḥijāb - was of this very nature.

This particular kind of the Ḥijāb of women - that the real place for

women be within the walls of the home and when they have to go out to take care of a need valid in the sight of the Shari'ah, then, they go out after having covered their whole body - was instituted after the hijrah to Madīnah in the Hijrah year 5. Relevant details follow.

By a consensus of the scholars of Muslim Ummah, the first verse about this kind of Ḥijāb is the one mentioned above: لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ (do not enter the houses of the Prophet - 53) and this verse was revealed at the time of the marriage of Sayyidah Zainab bint Jahsh رضى الله عنها and her entry into the home of the prophet as his blessed wife. As for the date of this marriage, Ḥafiz Ibn Hajar in Isabah and Ibn 'Abd-ul-Barr in Isti'ab have reported two sayings that it took place in the Hijrah year 3, or in the Hijrah year 5. Ibn Kathīr has preferred Hijrah year 5. Ibn Sa'd has reported Hijrah year 5 also from Sayyidnā Anas رضى الله عنه, This very view seems to be the preferred one from some narrations of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها as well. And Allah knows best.

In the cited verse, women were ordered to observe Ḥijāb and men were ordered to ask from them, if they have to ask for something, from behind the Ḥijāb. Here, particular emphasis has been placed on the observation of Ḥijāb in the sense that non-maḥram men and women have to remain apart, however, should there be the need to talk to women, men could do so from behind a Ḥijāb, curtain or something that obstructs the view.

Revealed in the noble Qur'an there are seven verses about the Ḥijāb of women and its details. Out of these, four have gone by right here in Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb while three of them have already appeared in Sūrah An-Nūr (Mā'ariful-Qur'an, Volume VI). It is universally agreed upon that the first verse to have been revealed about Ḥijāb is this very verse: لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤَدِّنَ لَكُمْ (Do not enter the houses of the prophet, unless you are permitted for a meal - 53). The three verses of Sūrah An-Nūr and the initial verse of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb where the blessed wives have been commanded to stay in their homes though appear earlier in the order of the Qur'an, yet in terms of their revelation, they come later. It has been explicitly said in the initial verse of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb that the said command has been given at a time when the blessed wives were divinely given the right to choose one of the following two courses. If they wanted to have extended worldly means, they should take a divorce from the

Holy Prophet ﷺ, and if they preferred the benefits of the Hereafter and were willing to remain satisfied with whatever worldly means were available to them in their present state of life, then, they could stay married to him.

It has also been mentioned in this event of choice that, among the wives given this choice, Sayyidah Zainab bint Jaḥsh رضى الله عنها was also included. This tells us that her marriage was already solemnized before the revelation of this verse. The said verse came after that. Similarly, there are the verses of Sūrah An-Nūr that carry details relating to Ḥijāb. These are, though earlier in the order of the Qur'ān, but in terms of their sequence of revelation, they too have been revealed with the incident of *Ifk* which came to pass on return from the battle of Banī al-Mustaliq or Muraisi'. This battle took place in the Hijrah year 6 - and the injunctions governing the Islamic legal Ḥijāb came to be enforced from the time when the verse of Ḥijāb was revealed in relevance to the marriage of Sayyidah Zainab رضى الله عنها. The verses of Sūrah An-Nūr relating to Ḥijāb have already appeared in Sūrah An-Nūr (Mā'ariful-Qur'ān, Volume VI).

### The difference between the injunctions of *Satr-ul-'Aurah* and Veiling of Women (Ḥijāb)

The part of the body, of a man or woman, called '*awrah* عورت in Arabic, *satr* (ستر) in Urdu and Persian is something the concealing of which is obligatory for everyone - legally, naturally and rationally - and is, after the initial article of Faith (Imān), the foremost obligation which must be carried out necessarily by concealing the private parts of the body. This duty has remained an obligation since the very beginning and has been a standing obligation in all religious codes brought by the noble prophets عليهم السلام. In fact, even before the advent of religious codes when, because of the tasting of the forbidden fruit in Jannah, the Paradisical apparel of Sayyidnā 'Ādam and Sayyidah Ḥawwā' came off leaving the cover-worthy parts of the body uncovered, even in that situation which was beyond his control, Sayyidnā 'Ādam ﷺ did not take it as permissible. Therefore, both of them, Sayyidnā 'Ādam and Sayyidah Ḥawwā', covered their private parts by placing a string of leaves over them. Thus, their '*awrah* came to be concealed. This is what is meant by the verse of the Qur'ān: طَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ (and they began to patch together upon themselves some leaves of Paradise - 7:22). From the

coming of Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام into this world right up to the last of the prophets, Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ, the concealment of 'awrah has remained obligatory in the religious code of every prophet. There could be a difference in the precise determination and limitation of body parts to be concealed, but the essential obligation of *satr* is decisively established in all religious codes of the prophets. Then, this obligation applies to all human beings, men and women, in its own right - whether or not there be someone else to see. For this reason, should there be a person who offers his Ṣalah in naked state in the darkness of night - then, despite the fact that nobody is seeing him, his Ṣalah will not be acceptable, if he does not have with him something to wear that is sufficient to cover the private parts of his body (*Satr*) - (Al-Baḥr- ur-Rā'iq).

There is no difference of opinion in the fact that it is obligatory to cover those parts of the body which are included in 'awrah' before people, even when one is not performing Ṣalah. But, in a state of privacy where no one is around to look, even there, it is not permissible, according to the correct view, to sit naked with one's coverable parts ('awrah) exposed without a need recognized by the Sharī'ah, (Al-Baḥr from Sharḥ al-Munyah).

This much was about the injunction of *satr-ul-'awrah* (the concealment of the coverable parts of the body) which has been obligatory from the advent of Islam, rather, from the very beginning, in all religious codes of the noble prophets, and in which, men and women are equal, equal in private and in public, just as it is not permissible to be naked before people, it is also not permissible to stay unnecessarily naked when alone or in private.

### **The second issue - the Ḥijāb of women**

Ḥijāb essentially requires that women do not appear before male strangers without proper cover. About this issue, at least this much has always remained established among prophets and the righteous and noble persons that there should be no free mixing between male strangers and women. In the incident about the two daughters of Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام, it is mentioned in the Qur'ān (Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ, 28:23, Part 20) that when the girls went to water their goats on the public well in the locality, they found it crowded with people who were watering their own flocks. It appears in the Qur'ān that these girls were standing aside, aloof from them. Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, who was passing by as a traveler, saw the

girls standing so aloof from others. When he asked them about the reason for it, they told him two things:

1. 'Right now, there is a crowd of men out there. We shall water our goats when these people will have finished watering gone'.

2. 'Our father is old and weak' which indicates that coming out to water domestic animals was not the job of women in terms of the commonly recognized practice. But, it was because of the old age and weakness of the father, or because of the absence of any other man around, they had to do this job.

This state of the daughters of Sayyidnā Shu'aib رضي الله عنه pointed out in the noble Qur'ān tells us that, even during that time and in their religious code too, free mixing of men and women and their working together shoulder to shoulder was not liked. In fact, any job which caused free contact with men was just not entrusted with women. However, keeping this whole thing in view, it appears that the injunction requiring women to observe regular Ḥijāb was yet to be enforced formally. Similarly, during the early period of Islam, the same situation kept prevailing. It was in the Hijrah year 3 or 5 that women were obligated with the observance of Ḥijāb before male strangers, the details of which appear later.

Now we know that the *satr* of 'awrah and the Ḥijāb of women are two separate issues and different from each other. *Satr-ul-'awrah* (concealment of coverable parts) has always been obligatory. The Ḥijāb of women was made obligatory in the Hijrah year 5. *Satr-ul-'awrah* is obligatory on men and women both while Ḥijāb is obligatory on women only. *Satr-ul-'awrah* is obligatory both in public and in private while Ḥijāb is obligatory only in the presence of male strangers. These details have been provided for the reason that by the jumbling of both these issues so many doubts rise impeding the understanding of the rulings and injunctions of the Qur'ān. For example, the face and the palms of a woman are excluded from *Satr-ul-'awrah* under the authority of consensus (*ijma'*). Therefore, should the face and palms remain uncovered in the state of Ṣalāh, the Ṣalāh is permissible, as agreed upon and as borne by consensus. As for face and palms, these are exempt in accordance with definitive textual authority. The feet have been

exempted by Muslim jurists on the analogy of face and palms.

But, whether or not the face and palms are exempted in the observance of Ḥijāb before male strangers is a matter in which difference exists, details of which have appeared earlier under the commentary on the verse of Sūrah An-Nūr: لَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا (and must not expose their adornment except that which appears thereof - 24:31), a summary of which will follow later.

### The degrees of Islamic legal Ḥijāb and the injunctions relating to them

The sum of seven verses of the Qur'ān and seventy narrations of Ḥadīth about the Ḥijāb of women seems to be that the real objective desirable in the sight of the Shari'ah is Ḥijāb-ul-ashkhas i.e. physical hiding of women from strangers. In other words, women and their movement should remain hidden from the sight of men, something that can be accomplished by means of the four walls of homes or tents or hanging curtains. All forms of Ḥijāb allowed other than this are all restricted by or conditional with the ground of need, time of need and measure of need.

Thus, the first degree of Ḥijāb - which is the really desired objective of the Shari'ah - is that women stay in their homes. But, the Shari'ah of Islam is a comprehensive and complete social system in which full consideration has been given to all human needs. Then, it is all too obvious that women will face inevitable circumstances when they have to go out of the house at some or the other time. For this purpose, the second degree of Ḥijāb, in the light of the Qur'ān, and Sunnah, seems to be that they should go out wearing a *burqa'* or long *shawl* concealing their whole body. To see their way, they leave only one eye open from inside the sheet, or use a patch of net before the eyes as is placed in a *burqa'* for this purpose. On occasions of need, this second degree of Ḥijāb too - like the first one - is agreed upon among all Muslim scholars and jurists.

From some narrations of Ḥadīth, there seems to emerge a third degree of Ḥijāb as well - in which the views of Ṣaḥābah, the Tabi'in and the jurists of Muslim community differ - according to which women, when they go out from the house, of necessity, they can let their face and palm remain open before people subject to the condition that their entire body is

concealed. A detailed description of these three degrees of Islamic legal Ḥijāb follows.

### The first degree of Ḥijāb from people by virtue of staying home

According to the Qur'ān and Sunnah, this degree is the one really desired. It stands clearly proved by the verse of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb under study right now: **وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعًا فَاسْأَلُوهُنَّ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ** (And when you ask any thing from them (the blessed wives of the Prophet), ask them from behind a curtain - 53). Still more explicit is the very initial verse of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb, that is: **وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ** (And remain in your homes.) The manner in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ put the guidance given in these verses into practice hardly leaves room for any further explanation.

We have already come to know that the first verse about the Ḥijāb of women was revealed at the time of the marriage of Sayyidah Zainab رضى الله عنها. As in the narrations of Ḥadīth, Sayyidnā Anas رضى الله عنه said, "I know this event of Ḥijāb more than anyone else for the reason that, at that time, I was present in the company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. When this verse requiring the observance of Ḥijāb was revealed, he put a sort of make-shift curtain from a sheet and had thus made Sayyidah Zainab رضى الله عنها seated hidden behind it - not that he would conceal her personally in a *burqa*' or long sheet.

The event relating to Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb رضى الله عنه appearing under the Background of Revelation described earlier also seems to indicate that Sayyidnā 'Umar رضى الله عنه simply wished that the blessed wives stay inside, away from the sight of men - as is evident from the words he used on this occasion: **يَدْخُلُ عَلَيْكَ الْبُرُ وَالْفَاجِرُ** (among those coming to you there are [all sorts of people] the righteous and the sinning).

According to a narration of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها appearing in the chapter of the battle of Muthah in the Ṣāḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ was informed of the Shahadah (martyrdom) of Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn Harithah, Ja'far and 'Abdullāh Ibn Rawahah رضى الله عنه, he was in the Masjid. His blessed face showed signs of intense grief and shock. I was watching what was happening there from inside my room through a crack in the door.

This proves that, the Ummul-Mu'minin, even at the time of such a shocking occurrence, did not come out in a *burqa*' to join the crowd of

people, instead, witnessed the proceedings from a crack in the door.

And in the chapter on 'Umratu 'l-Qada' in Kitāb- ul-Maghazī of the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhari, it appears that the nephew of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها, Sayyidnā 'Urwah Ibn Zubayr رضى الله عنه, and Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنه were sitting in the Mosque of the Prophet fairly close to the outer side of the living quarters of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah and were busy talking about the 'Umra visits of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنه says that, during that time, we could hear the voice of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah doing her *miswak* and clearing her throat coming out from inside the living quarters. Onward from here, mentioned there are the 'Umra visits of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. From this narration too, we learn that soon after the revelation of the verses of Ḥijāb, it had become the regular practice of the blessed wives that they would observe Ḥijāb virtually by staying at home.

Similarly, there is a Ḥadīth in the chapter on the battle of Ṭa'if in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhari saying that the Holy Prophet ﷺ gargled in a utensil of water and gave it to Sayyidnā Abu Mūsā and Bilāl رضى الله عنه to drink and wipe their faces with. Ummul-Mu'minin, Sayyidah Umm Salāmah رضى الله عنها was watching this incident from behind a curtain. She called the two blessed souls from inside the curtain asking them to spare a little from that *tabarruk* for their mother (meaning for herself).

This Ḥadīth too testifies that soon after the revelation of the order of Ḥijāb, the blessed wives used to stay inside homes and behind curtains.

### Special Note

Also noteworthy in this narration is the fact that even the blessed wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ were fond of his *tabarrukat* (plural of *tabarruk* meaning something blessed) just like other Muslims. This too is a singularity of his sanctified person alone, otherwise, the informal relationship a husband has with his wife would have made it habitually impossible to maintain this degree of reverence.

And according to a narration of Sayyidnā Anas رضى الله عنه in Kitāb-ul-'Adab of the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhari, he and Sayyidnā Abū Ṭalḥah رضى الله عنه were once going somewhere with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He was riding a camel. Ummul-Mu'minin, Sayyidah Safiyyah رضى الله عنها was also riding with him. En route, the camel stumbled all of a sudden and, according to the

report of Sayyidnā Abū Ṭalḥah, when he and Sayyidah Ṣafiyyah fell down from the back of the camel, Abū Ṭalḥah presented himself before him and submitted, 'May Allah accept me as ransom for you, are you hurt?' He said, 'No, you take care of the woman.' The first thing Sayyidnā Abū Ṭalḥah did was to hide his face with a piece of cloth, then he reached Sayyidah Ṣafiyyah and threw a sheet of cloth over her after which she stood up. Then, in the same manner, keeping her hidden behind proper cover, he had her mount her camel.

In this event too which came suddenly in the form of an accident, there is a lesson. It provides testimony to the fact that the noble Ṣaḥabah and the blessed wives gave great importance to the matter of Ḥijāb. The attention paid and the care and concern shown in this incident hardly leave any room for further explanations.

A Ḥadīth of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ud رضي الله عنه in Jami' of Tirmidhī reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

إِذَا خَرَجَتِ الْمَرْأَةُ اسْتَشْرَفَهَا الشَّيْطَانُ (قال الترمذی هذا حديث حسن صحيح غريب)

When a woman comes out (of her house), the Shaytan marks her out (that is, makes her a means of spreading evil among Muslims) - (Tirmidhī has termed this Ḥadīth as *ḥasan, ṣaḥīḥ, gharīb*).

And Ibn Khuzaymah and Ibn Ḥibban have also reported the following additional words in this Ḥadīth: وَأَقْرَبُ مَا تَكُونُ مِنْ وَجْهِ رَبِّهَا وَهِيَ فِي فَعْرِ بَيْتِهَا (And [a woman] is closer to her Rabb [Lord] when she is [hidden] in the midmost [section] of her house.

Present in this Ḥadīth too is the evidence of the fact that the real thing for women is no other but that they stay in their homes and do not go out (occasions of need remaining an exception).

And in a Ḥadīth; the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said: لَيْسَ لِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ فِي الْخُرُوجِ إِلَّا مَضْطَرَّةٌ (For women, there is no share in going out except when inevitable) - reported by Ṭabarānī, as quoted by Kanz, p. 283, v. 8)

And says a narration from Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه: 'Once I was present in the company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He asked the noble Ṣaḥabah, أَيُّ شَيْءٍ خَيْرٌ لِلْمَرْأَةِ "What is better for women? The Ṣaḥabah kept silent. They said nothing in response. Later, when I went home, I repeated the same

question before Faṭimah رضى الله عنها. She said, لَا يَرَيْنَ الرَّجَالَ وَلَا يَرُونَهُنَّ [that is, it is better for women that] 'neither they see men, nor are seen by them.' When I reported the answer given by her to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he said, صَدَقَتْ إِنَّهَا بَضْعَةٌ مِنِّي (She said it right. Of course, she is a part of me).

The reason why Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها was left behind in the wilderness during the event of Ifk was no other but that the Ḥijāb of the blessed wives was not simply restricted to the *burqa'* or long sheet, in fact, even while traveling, they used to be in their camel-litter (*shughduf* or *hawdaj*). This *shughduf* itself was mounted on the camel and was dismounted as such. A *shughduf* is like a miniature roomette for the traveler. During the course of this event, when the caravan started leaving, the attendants following their usual practice mounted the *shughduf* on the back of the camel assuming that the Ummul-Mu'minīn was already in there. But, the truth of the matter was that she was not there in it, rather, had gone out of it for physical relief. It was in this misunderstanding that the caravan departed and the Ummul-Mu'minīn was left behind in the wilderness.

This event too is a strong evidence of the fact that the sense of Islamic legal Ḥijāb as understood by the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his blessed wives was but that women stay in their homes and, if traveling, in their *shughduf* (camel-litter), their presence was not to be exposed before men. Then, this was the care and concern shown regarding the observance of Ḥijāb from men in the state of travel. From this, one can imagine the level of importance of Ḥijāb when a woman is in her normal residence.

### The second degree of Ḥijāb with *burqa'*

On occasions of need, when a woman has to go out of her house, she is required to be covered up from the head to the feet in some *burqa'* or long sheet in a manner that no part of the body is left exposed. This has its proof in the verse (59) of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb that is coming up a little later: يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لَأَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ (O prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers that they should draw down their shawls over them - 33:59). The original word used by the Qur'ān for 'shawls' is *jilbāb* (plural: *jalābīb*) which is a long sheet in which a woman gets to be hidden from the head to the feet. (This has been reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضى الله عنه)

Ibn Jarīr has, citing his own chains of authority, has reported from Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه the manner in which a *jilbāb* is used, that is, a woman should be wrapped therein, from the head to the feet, and that her face and nose too be hidden behind it - leaving only one eye uncovered to see the way. A detailed explanation of this verse will appear later. Here, the only purpose is to point out that, on occasion of need, when a woman has to go out of the house, then, she has to opt for this degree of Ḥijāb, that is, she be covered up with a *jilbāb* or something similar from the head to the feet, and that her face too - with the exception of one eye - be hidden.

This form too is permissible on occasions of need in accordance with the consensus of the jurists of the Muslim community. But, there are Ṣaḥīḥ (sound) *aḥadīth* where some restrictions have been placed even on the choice of this form, for example, she should not be wearing perfume, or ringing ornaments, and that she should walk on the side of the street and that she should not enter a crowd of men.

### **The third degree of Islamic legal Ḥijāb about which jurists differ**

The third degree of Ḥijāb is that the whole body of the woman is hidden from the head to the feet, but the face and palms remain open. The question whether this degree of Ḥijāb (where face and palms are exposed) is permissible has been a matter of difference of opinion between Muslim jurists which has emerged from different interpretations of the words إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ (except that which is open) occurring in Sūrah An-Nūr (24:31) Some commentators have interpreted these words to mean the face and palms, and therefore they have exempted them from Ḥijāb, and have held that it is permissible to leave them open. (as reported from Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās). But there are others among them who take the expression to mean *burqa*, *jilbāb* etc. These commentators hold it impermissible to expose face and palms. (as reported by Sayyidnā Ibn Mas‘ūd). But, even according to those who have called it permissible, the permissibility is subject to the condition that there should be no apprehension of *fitnah* (situation resulting in some evil consequence). Since the face of a woman is at the center of her beauty and embellishment, therefore, the absence of any apprehension of *fitnah* is a rare likelihood. Ultimately, for this reason, under normal conditions, opening the face etc. is not permissible even according to the first group of commentators.

Three Imāms - Mālik, Shafi'ī and Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal - out of the four took to the strict position and held it absolutely impermissible to expose face and palms, whether or not there is an apprehension of *fitnah*. As for Imām Abū Ḥanifah, he has, though, taken a different view, yet he has subjected it to the condition that there is no apprehension of *fitnah*, and since this condition remains customarily missing, therefore, Ḥanafi jurists too have not permitted the opening of the face and palms before non-Maḥrams.

The citations regarding the views of the four Imāms have been given in detail with reference to authentic books of these schools in this humble writer's treatise entitled *Tafsīl-ul-Khitāb*, published as part of the major work on *Aḥkam-ul-Qur'ān*. Since the original ruling of the Ḥanafi jurists opts for the exemption of the face and palms from Ḥijāb, therefore, a few citations of the Ḥanafi jurists are being given here in which it is mentioned that, due to the apprehension of *fitnah*, exposing face and palms is forbidden :

إِعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ لَا مُلَازِمَةَ بَيْنَ كَوْنِهِ لَيْسَ عَوْرَةً وَجَوَازِ النَّظْرِ إِلَيْهِ، فَجَلُّ النَّظْرِ مُنَوِّطٌ لِعَدَمِ  
خَشْيَةِ الشَّهْوَةِ مَعَ انْتِفَاءِ الْعَوْرَةِ، وَلِذَلِكَ حُرِّمَ النَّظْرُ إِلَى وَجْهِهَا وَوَجْهِ الْأَمْرَدِ إِذَا شَكَّ  
فِي الشَّهْوَةِ وَلَا عَوْرَةَ. (فتح القدير، ص ١٨١ ج ١)

"Let it be understood that there is no incumbency between the non-cover-worthiness of a certain part of the body and the permissibility of looking at it, because the permissibility of looking at it depends on there being no apprehension of sexual desire - although, that part of the body is not included under 'awrah (that which is coverable). For this reason, casting a look at the face of a female stranger (non-Mahram woman) or at the face of a beardless boy is forbidden when there is no doubt about the emergence of any sexual desire, although, the face is not included under 'awrah (that which has to be hidden)." (Fath-ul-Qadīr, page 181, volume 1)

From this observation of Fath-ul-Qadīr, we also come to know the exact meaning of the 'apprehension of sexual desire' i.e. for all practical purposes, though there may not exist any actual desire, but one may have a reasonable apprehension that such a desire will develop by looking at the face, it will be included in the *fitnah*. When such a doubt does exist, then, it is forbidden to look not only at the face of female strangers,

rather, even at the face of beardless boys. In addition to that, another explanation of the 'apprehension of sexual desire' appears in Jami' ar-Rumuz where it is said: 'It means that one's inner self is inclined to be close to her.' It is obvious that the absence of such a degree of inclination was rare even during the time of the early forbears of Islam (*salaf*). That the Holy Prophet ﷺ, when he saw Sayyidnā Faḍl رضي الله عنه looking at a woman, had turned his face to the other side with his own blessed hands is mentioned in Ḥadīth and is a clear proof of it. So, in this age infested with all sorts of corruption, who can claim to be immune to this apprehension?

And Imām Sarakhsi, the famous Ḥanafī scholar, has concluded his detailed discussion on the issue by saying:

وَهَذَا كُلُّهُ إِذَا لَمْ يَكُنِ النَّظْرُ عَنْ شَهْوَةٍ، فَإِنْ كَانَ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ، إِنْ نَظَرَ اسْتَهَى لَمْ يَحِلَّ لَهُ  
النَّظْرُ إِلَى شَيْءٍ مِنْهَا. (مبسوط، ص ١٥٢، ج ١٠)

And all this (the permissibility of looking at the face and palms) is restricted to a situation where one does not look at a woman with sexual desire. And if the person doing it knows that his looking at the face of a woman may motivate sexual inclinations, then, it is not lawful for him to cast a look towards any part of her body. (Mabsūt, page 152, volume 10)

And in Kitāb-ul-Karāhiyah of Radd-ul-Muḥtār, 'Allamāh Shāmi has said:

فَإِنْ خَافَ الشَّهْوَةَ أَوْ شَكَّ امْتِنَعَ النَّظْرُ إِلَى وَجْهِهَا، فَحِلُّ النَّظْرِ مُعَيَّدَةٌ بِعَدَمِ الشَّهْوَةِ  
وَالْأَفْحَرَامِ، وَهَذَا فِي زَمَانِهِمْ، وَأَمَّا فِي زَمَانِنَا فَمُنْعٌ مِنَ الشَّابَّةِ إِلَّا النَّظْرَ لِحَاجَةٍ  
كَقَاضٍ وَشَاهِدٍ يَحْكُمُ وَيَشْهَدُ وَأَيْضًا قَالَ فِي شُرُوطِ الصَّلَاةِ وَتَمْنَعِ الشَّابَّةِ مِنْ  
كَشْفِ الْوَجْهِ بَيْنَ رِجَالٍ لَا لِأَنَّهُ، عَوْرَةٌ بَلْ لِخَوْفِ الْفِتْنَةِ.

"If there exists an apprehension or doubt of sexual desire, looking at her will stand forbidden, because the lawfulness of looking is tied up with the absence of sexual desire, and when this condition is missing, it will be haram (forbidden) - and this is how it was during the time of the early forbears of Islam (*salaf*). But, as for our time, looking at women stands prohibited in an absolute sense - unless looking is needed for a valid reason recognized by the Sharī'ah, such as, in the case of a judge or witness who have to give a verdict or evidence." And in Shurut-us-Ṣalāh, the author has further observed, "A young

woman is prohibited from leaving her face open before (non-Maḥram) men not because the face is included in the 'awrah, but because of the apprehension of *fitnah*."

The gist of this debate and difference among jurists is that Imām Shafi'ī, Imām Mālik and Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, may Allah have mercy on them, have held the act of glancing at young women as prohibited absolutely, because it is usually a cause of *fitnah*, even though in a particular case it does not cause *fitnah* in actual terms. This approach has many precedents in Shari'ah. For instance, since traveling is usually a cause of difficulties, therefore, traveling itself has been held as a 'difficulty' for allowing concessions meant for difficult situations; thus a person may enjoy all concessions in Ṣalāh and fasting etc. when traveling, even if he does not face any difficulty during his journey and finds it more comfortable than his home. Similarly, since one is unconscious while asleep and wind would pass usually, therefore, sleep itself has been taken by the Shari'ah as passing of wind, and it is held that every sleep invalidates wudu', whether or not wind has passed in reality.

But, Imām Abū Ḥanifah did not hold the exposure of a woman's face and palms as *fitnah* in itself. Instead of that, he subjected the prohibition to the existence of *fitnah* in actual terms. In other words, this would be a situation in which there exists the apprehension or the probability of being attracted towards the woman seeking nearness to her. If so, it would stand prohibited; where this probability does not exist, it will be permissible. But, as we already know, the absence of such probability in this time of ours is absolutely rare. Therefore, the Ḥanafī jurists of later days, too, ultimately gave the same ruling given by the other three Imāms, that is, it is prohibited to look even at the face and palms of a young woman.

Now the outcome of this presentation is that, by a consensus of the four Imāms, this third degree of Islamic legal Ḥijāb, which stipulated that a woman appears before men after having covered her whole body in a burqa' or sheet etc., but leaving her face and palms exposed, stands prohibited. Therefore, what remains now of Ḥijāb is no more than its first two degrees. One of these is the real objective, that is, women remain inside their homes and do not go out without need. The other is going out

covered with *burqa'* or sheet on the basis of need, only at a time of need and to the extent of need.

### Ruling

In the injunctions of Ḥijāb mentioned above, there are some exceptions. For example, some males identified as Mahrams are exempted from Ḥijāb and very old women too are somewhat exempted from the purview of the common injunction of Ḥijāb. Some of its related detail has appeared in the commentary on Sūrah An-Nūr. (Mā'arif-ul-Qur'ān, volume vi) Some of it will appear later in the verses of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb where this exemption finds mention.

In view of the importance of the issue of Ḥijāb, we have reproduced a few essential points from our treatise entitled Tafsīl-ul-Khitāb fi Aḥkam-il-Ḥijāb, something sufficient for common readers. Should someone be interested in an exhaustive treatment of the subject, it could be seen in the treatise under reference. This treatise has been published in Aḥkam-ul-Qur'ān under the section dealing with the Tafsīr of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb. (And Allah, the Pure, the High, knows best).

### Verse 56

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ  
وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٥٦﴾

**Surely, Allah and His angels send blessings to the Prophet. O those who believe, do pray Allah to bless him, and send your Salām (prayer for his being in peace) to him in abundance. [56]**

### Commentary

In verses previous to this, some peculiarities and distinctions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ were mentioned as an adjunct to which the command to observe Ḥijāb was revealed while some injunctions of Ḥijāb will also appear later on. In between, the present verse contains a command to do something for which all these peculiarities and distinctions have been instituted in his blessed person, that is, the recognition and expression of the greatness of the station of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as well as an invitation to imbibe into one's own self the virtues of reverence, love and

obedience for him.

The real purpose of the verse was to obligate Muslims to send Ṣalāh (*durood*) and Salām upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ. But the command was given in a manner that, first of all, Allah Ta'ālā pointed out that He Himself and His angels perform the act of Ṣalāh for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. After that, common Muslims were ordered to follow suit. By doing so, it is indicated that the station of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is so high that the act asked to be done by common Muslims in his respect is something already done by Allah Ta'ālā Himself as well as angels with Him. Now then, common believers who are indebted to so many favours done to them by as their noble Prophet should certainly give high priority to making this act their essential concern. Then there is yet another good outcome of this modality of expression. It proves the great merit accredited to Muslims who send Ṣalāh and Salām as Allah Ta'ālā makes them share in doing what Allah Ta'ālā Himself does and so do His angels.

### The Meaning of Ṣalāh (*durood*) and Salām

The word: صَلَوة (Ṣalāh) is used in the Arabic language to convey the sense of: Mercy (*rahmah*), prayer (*du'ā'*) and praise (*madḥ* and *thanā'*). The Ṣalāh attributed to Allah Ta'ālā in the cited verse means His sending of mercy, but Ṣalāh from the angels denotes their prayer for him, and the sense of Ṣalāh (*durood*) from common believers is a combination of *du'ā'* (prayer) and *thanā'* (praise). Most commentators have given these very meanings and Imām Al-Bukhārī has reported from Abū-l-'Āliyah that the Ṣalāh of Allah Ta'ālā means the honor accorded to him and the praise showered on him before the angels. As for the honor bestowed on him by Allah Ta'ālā within this mortal world, it translates as the high rank he was blessed with when, on many an occasion, his mention was joined with the mention of Allah Ta'ālā in *adhān* (the initial call for prayers) and *iqamah* (the call announcing the immediate start of the prayer) and elsewhere, and that Allah Ta'ālā made the religion brought by him spread and prevail throughout the world, and that He enjoined upon all people to keep acting in accordance with the Shari'ah brought by him right through the last day of al-Qiyāmah and, along with it, He has undertaken to keep his Shari'ah stand perennially protected. Then, as for the honor bestowed upon him in the Hereafter, it can be said that his station was made to be the most exalted of the entire creation and, at a

time when no prophet or angel could dare intercede on behalf of anyone, it was right at that time that he was blessed with the celebrated station of intercession called: مقام محمود (Al-maqām-ul- maḥmūd: Praised Station).

Given the interpretation that Allah's Ṣalāh in favour of the Holy Prophet ﷺ means praise, someone may raise a doubt that, according to the narrations of Ḥadīth, Ṣalāh and Salām are also offered to the family and companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. If so, how can anyone other than him be made to share in the honor bestowed and praise done by Allah Ta'ālā? This doubt has been answered in Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī etc. by saying that the degrees of such honor and praise are many. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has it at its highest, while his family and companions and believers in general are included with him only to a certain degree.

As for the word: سَلَامٌ (Salām), it is an infinitive in the sense of السَّلَامَةُ (as-salamah) and means staying in peace. And السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ (As-salamu-'alaik: conveniently taken as 'peace on you') means: May the state of peace and security from losses, defects and calamities be with you. And since, according to the rule of Arabic grammar, this is not the occasion to use the word: عَلَى ('alā: on, upon), but since the word 'Salām' implies praise, hence the word: عَلَى ('alā) is appended with it.

And some other early commentators have taken the word: Salām here to mean the sacred Being of Allah Ta'ālā, because Salām is among the beautiful names of Allah Ta'ālā. According to this view the sentence will mean that Allah is enough to take care of your security and well-being.

### The method of Ṣalāh and Salām

There appears a Ḥadīth in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī and Muslim, as well as in other books of Ḥadīth, where Sayyidnā Ka'b Ibn 'Ujrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ has been reported to have said: '(When this verse was revealed), someone asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ " (The verse orders us to do two things, Ṣalāh and salām.) We already know the method of saying salām, (being السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ that is, may peace and safety be on you. O Prophet) now tell us the method of Ṣalāh also." He said: Say these words:

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ  
إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ،

اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَّجِيدٌ.

"O Allah, send mercy on Muḥammad and on the progeny of Muhammad, as You sent mercy on Ibrāhīm and on the progeny of Ibrāhīm. Verily, You are Praised, Glorious. O Allah, send blessings on Muḥammad and on the progeny of Muḥammad as You sent blessings on Ibrāhīm and on the progeny of Ibrāhīm. Verily, You are Praised, Glorious."

Some other words in this respect have also been reported in other narrations of Ḥadīth.

As for the reason why the noble Ṣaḥābah asked this question, perhaps it is that they had already been taught the method of offering their Salām in the تَشَهُدُ : (التَّحِيَّاتُ : At-tahiyāt) where it is said: أَلْسَلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ (as-salāmu 'alaika aiyuhannabiyyu wa raḥmatullāhi wa barakātuh: Peace and safety on you, O Prophet, and the mercy of Allah and His blessings). Therefore, they did not like to determine, on their own, the precise words in the case of the saying of Ṣalāh. Instead of that, they wanted the exact words of saying the Ṣalāh to be determined by the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself. It is for this reason that صَلَاةُ (Ṣalāh) has generally been adopted in these very words as part of the prescribed prayers, Namāz or Ṣalāh. But, it does not mean that the obligation of sending Ṣalāh (*durud*) is restricted to these specific words, because many different forms of Ṣalāh (*durud*), have been authentically reported from the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself. The requirement of sending Ṣalāh and Salām can be fulfilled by every such sentence that has the words of Ṣalāh and Salām in it. Then, it is also not necessary that those words should have been reported exactly as said by the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In fact, the obligation may be discharged and the reward of sending Ṣalāh may be achieved by any style of address that conveys the words of Ṣalāh and Salām. But, it is obvious that the exact words reported from the Holy Prophet ﷺ are certainly much more blessed and are the cause of bringing many more rewards. It was for this very reason that the noble Ṣaḥābah had asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself to determine the words of صَلَاةُ (Ṣalāh).

In the Qa'dah (sitting position) of the prescribed prayer (Ṣalāh or Namāz), the saying of the words of Ṣalāh and Salām exactly in the manner reported above is *masnūn* (per Sunnah) right up to the last day

of Qiyāmah, (even though these words are meant to address the Holy Prophet ﷺ by saying ' Salām on you, O prophet') As for occasions outside the prescribed prayers (Ṣalāh or Namāz), these exact words should have been employed when the Holy Prophet ﷺ was addressed during his lifetime. When, after his departure from this mortal world, one has the good fortune of standing before the sacred Rawdah (the holy tomb) of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and submitting his Salām to him, then, there too, it is *masnūn* to employ the form of second person: السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ (*as-salamu 'alaik*). Other than that, wherever Ṣalāh and Salām is recited in absentia, then, the use of the third person form has been reported from the Ṣaḥābah, Tabi'in and the Imāms of the Muslim Ummah - for example: ... (*sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam* i.e. May Allah send mercy and peace to him.- as fully demonstrated by books of Ḥadīth at large.

### The wisdom behind the aforesaid method of Ṣalāh and Salām

The outcome of the method of Ṣalāh and Salām which stands proved from the blessed words spoken by him and demonstrated practically through his deeds is no other but that all of us in the Muslim Ummah should pray to Allah Ta'ālā for mercy, peace and safety for him. At this point, a question is worth noting. Is it not that the verse required us to personally fulfill the right of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that he be revered and honored, but the method proposed was that we pray to Allah? Embedded here is the hint that fulfilling the due right of honoring and obeying the Holy Prophet ﷺ was not within the power and control of any of us, therefore, it was made mandatory for us that we should supplicate before Allah Ta'ālā. (Rūḥ-ul- Ma'ānī)

### The injunctions of Ṣalāh and Salām

In the last *Qa'dah* (sitting position) of the prescribed prayers, (*namāz* or Ṣalāh), the saying of درود شریف (Ṣalāh, that is, the noble *durūd*) is Sunnah Mu'akkadah (emphasized Sunnah) according to the majority of the Imāms. But, with Imām Shafī'ī and Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, it is *wājib* (necessary). If abandoned, it becomes necessary, according to them, to make *namāz* or Ṣalāh all over again.

### Related Rulings

1. When someone mentions the name of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, or hears someone mentioning it, reciting the words of sending Ṣalāh (the noble *durūd*) becomes *wājib* (obligatory) on him or her. This is a point of

consensus among the majority of Muslim jurists. The reason is that there are warnings in Ḥadīth against not reciting the noble durud when his blessed name is being referred. According to Jami' of Tirmidhī, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: رَغِمَ أَنْفُ رَجُلٍ ذُكِرْتُ عِنْدَهُ، فَلَمْ يُصَلِّ عَلَيَّ : "Disgraced is the man before whom I am mentioned, yet he does not send Ṣalāh (Durūd) on me". (Tirmidhī calls this Ḥadīth 'Ḥasan', and Ibn-us- Sunni reports it with strong authorities).

And in another Ḥadīth it has been said: أَلْبَجِيلُ مَنْ ذُكِرْتُ عِنْدَهُ، فَلَمْ يُصَلِّ عَلَيَّ "A miser is he before whom I am mentioned yet he does not send Ṣalāh (Durūd) on me". (reported by Tirmidhī who rated it as 'Ḥasan Ṣaḥīḥ').

2. If his blessed mention is made repeatedly in a single sitting, reciting the Ṣalāh (Durūd) only once may discharge the obligation. But, the desirable (*mustaḥabb*) thing is to recite the noble Durud every time one makes his blessed mention himself, or hears someone else make it. Who can claim to mention the name of the Holy Prophet ﷺ more frequently than the scholars of the Ḥadīth? Their function is nothing but to narrate the aḥādīth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in which they have to mention his name repeatedly. Still, their consistent practice was to recite or write the Ṣalāh each and every time. All books of Ḥadīth bear testimony to this fact. In doing so, they never bothered about this incidence of repetition of Ṣalāh and Salām which would increase the volume of the book in a sizable measure, because fairly often, there come very short aḥādīth in which his blessed name finds mention after every one or two lines - and at places, it appears more than once within one single line - still, these respected scholars and experts of Ḥadīth never abandon or ignore Ṣalāh and Salām anywhere.

3. The way it is Wājib (necessary) to say Ṣalāh and Salām vocally at the time one makes his blessed mention verbally, similarly, it is also wājib to write Ṣalāh and Salām with the pen when one uses it at the time of writing. In this case, there are people who would abbreviate its words and get away by writing صلعم (of which, "SAW" is a counterpart). This is not enough. One should write the full Ṣalāh and Salām (that is: صلى الله عليه وسلم : Ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam).

4. At the time his blessed mention is being made, the better, higher and more desirable choice is no other but that both Ṣalāh and Salām be

recited and written. But, should someone take one of these, that is, only Ṣalāh or only Salām, as sufficient, then, it is no sin in the sight of the majority of Muslim jurists. Shaykh-ul-Islām Nawawī and others have declared it as *makrūh* (reprehensible) to take only one as sufficient. Ibn Ḥajar Al-Haithami said that by *Karāhah* (reprehensibility) they mean its being *Khilāf-ul-awla* (contrary to the preferred choice) which is known as *Makrūh Tanzīhī* (not desirable). And the consistent practice of the 'ulama' of the Muslim Ummah bears testimony to the fact that they invariably put these together while, on some occasions, they would go by only one as well.

5. Using the word: صلوة (Ṣalāh) for anyone other than prophets عليهم السلام is not permissible in the sight of the majority of 'Ulama'. In his Sunan, Imām Baihaqi has reported the *fatwā* of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه as follows: لا يُصَلَّى عَلَى أَحَدٍ إِلَّا عَلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَكِنْ يَدْعَى لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ بِالصَّلَاةِ (Ṣalāh is not sent upon any one except the Holy Prophet ﷺ but prayer is made for Muslim men and Muslim women to seek forgiveness for them.)

With Imām Shafi'ī, using the word: صلوة (Ṣalāh) for any one other than a prophet is perennially *Makrūh* (reprehensible, repugnant). Imām Abū Ḥanifah and his pupils also hold the same view. However, it is permissible that after saying Ṣalāh for the Holy Prophet, some other people are also included in the same sentence, like his family members ('Āl), Companions and all believers.

And Imām Juwaini said that the rule about the word: صلوة (Ṣalāh) is the same as the rule about the word: سلام (Salām), since it is not correct to use it for someone other than a prophet - except that one says السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ (as-salamu-'alaikum) as a greeting while addressing someone. This is permissible, and Masnūn. But, saying or writing: عليه السلام ('alaihissalām) with the name of someone absent is not correct in the case of someone other than a prophet (Al-khaṣā'is-ul-kubrā, by Suyūṭī, v.2, p. 262)

'Allāmah Liqa'ī has quoted Qādī 'Iyāḍ saying: Major authentic scholars of the Muslim Ummah have gone by this view, and this is the view of Imām Mālik, Sufyān and many Muslim jurists who hold that its use is not permissible for anyone other than a prophet. This is similar to the case of the use of اللّٰهُ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى (Subḥanahū wa Ta'ālā) which is

particular to Almighty Allah. Thus, in the case of common Muslims - with the exception of prophets - there should be a prayer for forgiveness and pleasure from Allah. This is as it appears in the Qur'an: رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ (Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him - 5:119, 9:100, 28:22, 98:8). (Rūḥ-ul- Ma'ānī)

A detailed discussion about the injunctions of Ṣalāh and Salām appears in the treatise *Tanqīḥ-ul-kalām fī Aḥkām-is-Ṣalāh was-salām* written by this humble author. It was published as part of the commentary on Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb in the major work *Aḥkām-ul- Qur'an* in Arabic.

### Verses 57 - 58

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ  
وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا ﴿٥٧﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ  
بِغَيْرِ مَا اكْتَسَبُوا فَقَدْ احْتَمَلُوا بُهْتَانًا وَإِثْمًا مُّبِينًا ﴿٥٨﴾

Surely, those who annoy Allah and His Messenger are cursed by Allah in this world and the Hereafter, and He has prepared for them a humiliating punishment. [57] And those who hurt believing men and believing women without their having done anything (wrong), they shall bear the burden of slander and a manifest sin. [58]

### Commentary

In the previous verses, Muslims were warned against doing what caused pain to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. But, some Muslims used to get involved into doing such things unintentionally simply because of their lack of knowledge or attention. For example, walking into his living quarters without having been invited or, in the event of an invitation to eat at the house, coming in and sitting there much earlier than the time set for it or, once the meals were over, just keep hanging at the house talking to each other and keep delaying their due departure. Upon this, a warning has been served in the verse: يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ (O those who believe, do not enter the houses of the Prophet - 33:53). This was the pain caused to the Holy Prophet ﷺ without any volition or intention, simply by negligence. On this, only a warning was considered sufficient.

Mentioned in the two verses cited above is the pain that was caused to him intentionally by the disbelievers and hypocrites. It is for this reason that Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thanāvī has parenthetically added the word: قَصْدًا (*qaṣḍan*: intentionally) at this place in his abridged summary which includes many a physical pain caused to him at the hands of disbelievers on different occasions as well as the emotional ones that were caused to him in the form of taunts and insults and false accusations against his blessed wives. The cited verses also gives a warning of Divine curse and punishment to those who cause such pains to him by intention.

Although, in the beginning of the verse, warning is given to those who cause pain to Allah (Surely, those who cause pain to Allah... 33:57), while Allah Ta'ālā is beyond any effect or impression, and no one can cause pain to Him in real terms, yet the deeds that usually cause pain to others have been referred to as 'causing pain to Allah.'

Leading authorities of Tafsīr, however, differ in defining the acts that are termed here as 'causing pain to Allah'. Some of them have maintained that these are the words and deeds about which it has been specifically declared in the spoken aḥādīth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that they cause pain to Allah Ta'ālā. For example, it is mentioned in a Ḥadīth that those who curse the 'time' cause pain to Allah. The background of this Ḥadīth is that the people in the days of ignorance used to blame the 'time' for all sorts of accidents and sufferings, because they believed that the 'time' is the real cause of all happenings in this world. Therefore whenever they faced a suffering, they used to curse and hurl abuses to the 'time', while in fact the real doer of all acts is none but Allah Ta'ālā, and in this context their curse and abuses would turn to Him. It is therefore mentioned in the of Divine curse and punishment Ḥadīth that this behavior causes pain to Allah Ta'ālā. Moreover, as it appears in Ḥadīth narrations, making pictures of living creatures cause pain to Allah Ta'ālā. the expression of 'causing pain to Allah' would be referring to these very words and deeds.

And other authorities of Tafsīr said that the real purpose at this place is to warn against causing pain to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. But, it has been termed in the verse as causing pain to Allah Ta'ālā, because causing pain to the Prophet ﷺ is tantamount to causing pain to Allah Ta'ālā Himself. This interpretation is supported by the context of the Qur'ān, because it is the subject of causing pain to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that was mentioned in

the text earlier and the same subject is repeated again in the forthcoming words. And that the pain caused to the Holy Prophet ﷺ turns out to be pain for Allah Ta'ālā stands proved from the narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn Mughaffal al-Muzanī رضي الله عنه given below:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: اللَّهُ أَلَّهُ فِي أَصْحَابِي لَا تَتَّخِذُوهُمْ عَرَضًا مِنْ بَعْدِي فَمَنْ أَحَبَّهُمْ فَبِحَبِي أَحِبَّهُمْ وَمَنْ أَبْغَضَهُمْ فَبِعِضِي أَبْغَضَهُمْ وَمَنْ أَدْبَهُمْ فَقَدْ أَدَانِي وَمَنْ أَدَانِي فَقَدْ أَدَى اللَّهُ وَمَنْ أَدَى اللَّهُ يُوشِكُ أَنْ يَأْخُذَ (ترمذی)

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Fear Allah, fear Allah in the matter of my Companions. Do not make them the target of your objections and criticisms because whoever loves them loves them because of his love for me, and whoever dislikes them dislikes them because of his disliking against me, and whoever caused pain to them has definitely caused pain to me and whoever caused pain to me has definitely caused pain to Allah, and whoever caused pain to Allah, it is likely that he will be seized by Him.- (Tirmidhī)

Just as this Ḥadīth tells us that the pain inflicted on the Holy Prophet ﷺ causes pain to Allah Ta'ālā, very similarly, it also tells us that inflicting pain on any of the noble Companions or being audacious enough as to speak ill of them becomes pain caused to the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

There are several narrations relating to the background in which this verse was revealed. According to some of these, it was revealed about the false accusation made against Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها. For example, a narration from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه says: When false accusation was made against Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها, some people gathered at the home of the hypocrite, 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Ubayy and indulged in the conspiracy of giving currency to this false accusation. At that time, the Holy Prophet ﷺ complained before his noble Companions saying that the man was causing pain to him - (Maḥzarī).

According to some other narrations, this verse was revealed when some hypocrites had thrown taunts at the time of the marriage of Sayyidah Ṣafīyyah رضي الله عنها. However, the the fact of the matter is that this verse has been revealed concerning each such case which caused pain to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Thus, included here is the false accusation made against Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها, the taunts thrown by the

hypocrites on the occasion of the marriages of Sayyidah Safiyyah and Zainab رضى الله عنها as well as calling other noble Companions bad, passing ill remarks against them or maligning them in any other way, public or private تبرء (tabarrā).

### Causing pain to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in any form or manner is kufr (infidelity)

#### Ruling

A person who inflicts any pain on the Holy Prophet ﷺ, suggests any fault in his person or attributes, whether expressly or in an implied manner, becomes a *kāfir* - and according to this verse (57), the curse of Allah Ta'ālā will be upon him in this world as well as in the Hereafter. (As stated by Qādī Thanā'ullah in at-Tafsīr al-Maḥḥarī).

The second verse has declared that causing pain to any believer is also forbidden (*ḥarām*) as being a grave sin a manifest slander, but in the case of common believers the prohibition of causing pain is subjected to a condition that they should not have deserved it by committing a wrongful act. This is because, in their case it is possible that they have done something as a consequence of which causing pain to them is permissible under the dictates of the Sharī'ah, while in the case of the Allah and the Holy Prophet ﷺ it is simply impossible that causing pain to Allah and His Messenger may be justified on any ground. Therefore, no such condition is mentioned in verse 57.

### Hurting or causing pain to any Muslim without a valid Islamic legal justification is forbidden (Ḥarām)

It stands proved from the cited verse (58): الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (And those who hurt believing men and believing women without their having done anything (wrong), they shall bear the burden of slander and a manifest sin.) that it is forbidden (Ḥarām) to cause any pain, harm or hurt any Muslim without a justification recognized by Sharī'ah. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

الْمُسْلِمُ مَنْ سَلِمَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ مِنْ لِسَانِهِ وَيَدِهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُ مَنْ أَمِنَهُ النَّاسُ عَلَى دِمَائِهِمْ  
وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ، رواه الترمذى عن أبى هريرة (مظهرى)

A (true) Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hands all Muslims remain unharmed and safe. And a (true) *mu'min* (believer) is the one

from whom people remain unaffected and safe in the matter of their lives (lit., bloods) and their properties (being his or her duty to ensure that so these do) - reported by Tirmidhī from Sayyidnā Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه. (Maḥzarī)

### Verses 59 - 62

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لَأَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَبَنَاتِكُمْ وَنِسَاءَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ  
 مِنْ جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا  
 رَحِيمًا ﴿٥٩﴾ لَئِنْ لَمْ يَنْتَهِ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ  
 وَالْمُرْجِفُونَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ لَنُغْرِيَنَّكَ بِهِمْ ثُمَّ لَا يُجَاوِرُونَكَ فِيهَا إِلَّا  
 قَلِيلًا ﴿٦٠﴾ مَلْعُونِينَ ۗ أَيَّمَا تَفُوءٍ أَخَذُوا وَقَتَلُوا تَقْتِيلًا ﴿٦١﴾ سَنَّةَ  
 اللَّهِ فِي الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ ۗ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسِنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا ﴿٦٢﴾

O prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers that they should draw down their shawls over them. That will make it more likely that they are recognized, hence not teased. And Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [59] If the hypocrites and those having malady in their hearts and the ones who spread rumors in Madinah do not stop (their evil deeds), We will certainly stir you up against them, then they shall no longer live in it as your neighbors, but for a little while, [60] (and that too in a state of being) accursed. Wherever they are found, they shall be seized, and shall be killed thoroughly. [61] – a consistent practice of Allah in the matter of those who have gone before. And you will never find a change in Allah's consistent practice. [62]

### Commentary

The previous verses have maintained that causing pain to any Muslim, man or woman, is forbidden and is a major sin, and in particular, inflicting pain on the Holy Prophet ﷺ is an act of infidelity, liable to Allah's curse. Now, there were two kinds of pain caused by the hypocrites to all Muslims and to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Preventive measures against these have been provided in the verses cited above. As a corollary, stated

there are a few additional injunctions in a certain congruity to be unfolded later on. One of these two kinds of pain caused was at the hands of vagabonds from among the general run of hypocrites who used to molest bondwomen from Muslim homes when they came out to take care of family chores. Then on occasions, they would mistreat free women under the impression that they were bondwomen because of which pain was caused to Muslims at large and to the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

On the other hand, the Shari'ah of Islam has maintained a difference between free women and bondwomen in the matter of Ḥijāb. The limits of Ḥijāb prescribed for bondwomen are the limits observed by the free women before their *mahrams* (marriage with whom is forbidden), for example, as leaving the face open before their *mahrams* is permissible for free women, the same was permissible for bondwomen even when they went out of their homes, because their very job was to serve their masters, an occupation that took them out of the home repeatedly which made it difficult for them to keep their face and hands hidden. This is contrary to the case of free women who, even if they have to go out for some need, would be doing so rarely, an eventuality in which the observance of full Ḥijāb should not be difficult. Therefore, the command given to free women was that the long sheet with which they cover themselves when going out should be pulled from over their head downwards before their face, so that it does not get exposed before male strangers. Two things were accomplished thereby. It made their own Ḥijāb come out perfect while covering their faces served another purpose of distinguishing them from bondwomen, because of which they automatically became safe from being teased by wicked people. As for the arrangements made to keep bondwomen protected, the hypocrites were served with a warning to the effect that, should they fail to abstain from their low behavior, (the torment of the Hereafter aside) Allah Ta'ālā would have them punished at the hands of His Prophet and Muslims in this world as well.

The words used in the command about the Ḥijāb of free women in the verse under study (59) appear as follows: يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ in which the word: يُدْنِينَ (*yudnīna*) has been derived from: إِذْنًا (*idnā*) which literally means to draw, pull or make come closer. The second word: عَلَيْهِنَّ (*'alaihinn*) means 'on' or 'over themselves' (hanging as a screen for the face). The third word: جَلَابِيبَ (*jalābīb*) in: جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ (*jalābībihinn*) is the plural

form of: جِلْبَاب (*jilbāb*) which is the name of a particular long sheet. Sayyidnā Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه identified the form of this sheet as the one that is worn over the scarf (Ibn Kathīr) and Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه described its form in the words given below:

أَمَرَ اللَّهُ نِسَاءَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا خَرَجْنَ مِنْ بُيُوتِهِنَّ فِي حَاجَةٍ أَنْ يَغْطِينَ وُجُوهُهُنَّ مِنْ  
فَوْقِ رُؤُسِهِنَّ بِالْحِجَابِ وَيُبْدِينَ عَيْنًا وَاحِدَةً (ابن كثير)

"Allah Ta‘ālā commanded women of the believers that, when they go out of their homes to take care of some need, they hide their faces with the long sheet (hanging down) from over their heads leaving only one eye open (to see the way)." - (Ibn Kathīr)

And Imām Muḥammad Ibn Sirin says: 'When I asked ‘Ubaidah Salmānī رضي الله عنه about the meaning of this verse and the nature of Ḥijāb, he demonstrated it by hiding his face with the long sheet pulled from the top of his head and left to hang in front of it - and thus, by keeping only his left eye open to see, he explained the words: *idnā’*: (bring close) and: *jilbāb* (long sheet or shawl) practically.'

'To have the long sheet come from over the head and hang on, or in front of, the face' which appears in the statement of Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه and ‘Ubaidah Salmani رضي الله عنه رحمة الله تعالى is the explanation (Tafsīr) of the Qur’ānic word: عَلَيْهِنَّ (*‘alaihinna*: over them), that is, the sense of bringing the sheet close over them is to let the sheet come from over the head and hang on, or in front of, the face.

This verse commands the hiding of the face with ample clarity which comprehensively supports what has been stated under the commentary on the first verse of Ḥijāb appearing earlier. There it was said that, though the face and the palms of the hands are not included under *satr* as such but, under the apprehension of *fitnah*, hiding these too is necessary. Only situations of compulsion stand exempted.

### A necessary point of clarification

This verse instructs free women to observe Ḥijāb in a particular manner, that is, they should hide their face by bringing the sheet from over the head to hang on, or in front of, the face so that they could be recognized as distinct from bondwomen in general, and thus could stay protected from the *fitnah* of wicked people. The statement referred to immediately earlier has already made it very clear that it never means

that Islam has allowed some difference to exist between free women and bondwomen in the matter of providing protection to the chastity and honor, and has protected free women and left bondwomen (to fend for themselves). Instead, the truth of the matter is that this difference was made by these wicked and low people themselves, as they simply did not dare act high-handedly against free women, but chose to tease bondwomen. The Sharī'ah of Islam took a functional advantage from this difference put into practice by them by ordering the free women to distinguish themselves, so that the majority of women becomes automatically protected through their own standing conduct in this matter. As far as the matter of bondwomen is concerned, the protection of their chastity and honor is as much necessary in Islam as that of free women. But, it could not be carried out except by using the legal authority. So, the next verse spells out that those who violate the law will not be forgiven - in fact, as and where they are found, they will be caught and killed. This is what provided a security shield for the chastity and honor of bondwomen as well.

This submission makes it clear that the interpretation offered in this verse by 'Allāmah Ibn Ḥazm and others - as different from the majority of scholars and in an effort to escape the doubt mentioned above - is something just no necessary. A doubt could have come up only when no arrangement was made for the protection of bondwomen.

### **A person who turns an apostate (*murtadd*) after having embraced Islam is killed in punishment**

Two mischiefs made by the hypocrites have been mentioned in the cited verse and it has been said that should they fail to abstain from indulging in these any further, the punishment they shall face will be: *مَلْعُوبِينَ أَيْنَمَا تُقْبَلُوا أُجْدُوا وَقْتَلُوا تَقْتِيلًا* (Wherever they are found, they shall be seized, and shall be killed thoroughly - 61). This punishment is not meant for disbelievers at large. Numerous textual authorities from the Qur'ān and Sunnah bear it out that this is not the law of the Sharī'ah of Islam for disbelievers. In fact, the law is that they should first be invited to embrace Islam along with sincere efforts to remove any doubts they may have. If, even then, they elect not to enter the fold of Islam, they should be asked to live as Dhimmī subjects of the Muslim state. If they accept that, the protection of their life, property and honor becomes obligatory on Muslims very much like that of Muslims themselves. Yes, if there are

those who do not accept this too, and choose the option of fighting, then, the command is to fight back against them.

The reason why this punishment to seize and kill them has been awarded in an absolute sense in the present verse is because this matter related to the hypocrites who used to call themselves Muslims - and when a Muslim starts demonstrating open hostility to and denial of Islam, such a person is called: *Murtadd*: apostate) in the terminology of the Sharī'ah. With such a man, there is no compromise in the Sharī'ah of Islam - except that he repents and reverts to Islam and accepts the injunctions of Islam in word and deed. Otherwise, this person will be killed as it stands proved from clear statements of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the collective practice of the noble Ṣaḥābah. The Jihād waged against the Liar Musaylimah and his cohorts with the collective approval of the Ṣaḥābah and the consequent killing of Musaylimah is sufficient as its proof. Then, in the last verse as well (62), this has been cited as the customary law and practice of Allah Ta'ālā which tells us that the punishment of an apostate (*murtadd*) in the religious laws of past prophets was no other but killing.

### Some Rulings:

This verse proves that:

(1) When women have to go out of the house to take care of some need, they should go with their whole body covered with a long sheet and walk face-hidden with this sheet brought from over the head to hang on, or in front of, the face. The common '*burqa*' also serves the same purpose.

(2) Spreading rumors among Muslims that subject them to anxiety or worry or cause harm is *ḥarām* (forbidden, unlawful).

### Verses 63 - 68

يَسْتُلْكَ النَّاسُ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ ۗ قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ  
لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ تَكُونُ قَرِيبًا ﴿٦٣﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَنَ الْكُفْرِينَ وَاعَدَّ لَهُمْ  
سَعِيرًا ﴿٦٤﴾ خَلْدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۗ لَا يَجِدُونَ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿٦٥﴾  
يَوْمَ تَقَلَّبُ وُجُوهُهُمْ فِي النَّارِ يَقُولُونَ لِيَلَيْتَنَا أَطَعْنَا اللَّهَ وَأَطَعْنَا  
الرَّسُولَ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّا أَطَعْنَا سَادَتَنَا وَكُبَرَاءَنَا فَأَضَلُّونَا

السَّبِيلَا ﴿٦٧﴾ رَبَّنَا اتِّهِمْ ضِعْفَيْنِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ وَالْعَنُومُ لَعْنَا كَبِيرًا  
 ﴿٦٨﴾

People ask you about the Hour (i.e.the Day of Judgment). Say," Its knowledge is only with Allah." And what can let you know? It may be that the Hour is near. [63]

Surely, Allah has cursed the infidels, and has prepared for them a flaming fire, [64] wherein they will live for ever, finding no one to protect or to help. [65] The Day their faces will be rolled in the fire, they will say, " Oh, would that we had obeyed Allah and obeyed the Messenger !". [66] And they will say, " Our Lord, we obeyed our chiefs and our elders, and they made us go astray from the path. [67] Our Lord, give them twice the punishment, and send a curse on them, an enormous curse. [68]

### Commentary

Those hostile to Allah and the Messenger were warned of and alerted to curse and punishment in the present world and in the Hereafter while many factions among the disbelievers, in their own place, simply denied the eventuality of any Qiyāmah (Doomsday) or 'Ākhirah (Hereafter) and, because of their denial, used to mockingly ask: When would that Qiyāmah come? An answer to their question has been given in the cited verse, that the Doomsday may be in near future. It has been said so because nobody knows the exact date of the Doomsday, and therefore everyone should be prepared for it as if it were very close. Another reason for its being declared as close is that after facing the horrible incidents of Qiyāmah the entire worldly life of thousands of years will seem to be very short (and the Qiyāmah very close to it).

### Verses 69 - 71

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ آذَوْا مُوسَى فَبَرَّاهُ اللَّهُ مِمَّا قَالُوا وَكَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَجِيهًا ﴿٦٩﴾ يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ﴿٧٠﴾ يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ

ذُنُوبِكُمْ ۖ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ، فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٧١﴾

O those who believe, do not be like those who caused pain to Musa, then Allah cleared him of what they said. And he was honorable in the sight of Allah. [69] O those who believe, fear Allah, and speak what is straight forward. [70] Allah will correct your deeds for your benefit, and forgive for you your sins. And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger achieves a great success. [71]

### Commentary

That causing pain to Allah and His Messenger brings fatal consequences was the subject of the previous verse. The present verse instructs Muslims that they should particularly guard against falling into any stance of hostility to Allah and His Messenger because it causes pain to them.

In the first verse (69), by mentioning an event relating to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, an event in which his people had caused pain to him, Muslims have been warned that they should never do something like that. From this, it does not necessarily follow that Muslims may have actually done so. Instead of that, by relating this incident, they have been forewarned as a matter of precaution. As for the incident of some Ṣaḥābah reported in a narration, it is likely that they would have not realized at that time that the word being said would cause pain to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. That a Ṣaḥābī would intentionally cause pain to the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not possible. Whatever incidents of intentional causing of pain there are, they all relate to hypocrites. Then, by citing the incident relating to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has himself explained the meaning of this verse as it has been reported by Imām al-Bukhārī from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه in Kitabut-Tafsīr and Kitabut-Anbiya'. There it is said that 'Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was a man of modesty and very particular in keeping his body properly covered. No one had the occasion to see his body uncovered. Whenever he needed a bath, he would take it inside a screened place. Conversely, his people, the Bani Isrā'īl, had a common custom of their own. Among them, men would bathe naked before everybody. So, some of them started saying that the reason why Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام would not take a bath before anyone is that he had

some defect in his body, either leprosy or enlarged testicles or some other evil-fated deformity because of which he preferred to remain hidden. Allah Ta'ālā willed that Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام be cleared from the attribution of such defects. On a certain day, Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام went in for a bath in private while he put off his clothes and placed these on a rock. When done with his bath, he moved to pick up his clothes from the rock. At that time, this rock (moving under Divine command) started running away. Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, with his staff in hand, went after the rock saying: *تُوبِي حَجْرُ تُوبِي حَجْرُ* (O rock, my clothes! O rock, my clothes!). But the rock kept moving until it stopped at a place crowded with the people of Banī Isrā'il. At that time, when the Banī Isrā'il saw Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام undressed from the head to the feet, they saw a body that was perfect (having no defect attributed by them). Thus, Allah Ta'ālā made it clear before everyone that Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was free from these supposed defects. The rock had stopped at this place. Once Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام had picked up his clothes and put these on, he started beating up the rock with his staff. "By Allah," said the Holy Prophet ﷺ "the strikes of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام against the rock left some three or four or five traces on it!"

After having recounted this event, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: This is what this verse of the Qur'ān means, that is, the verse under study: *كَالَّذِينَ أَذَوْا مُوسَى* (Like those who caused pain to Mūsā.. - 33:69). The explanation of the pain caused to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام in this incident has been reported from the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself. There is yet another story relating to the pain caused to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام reported from the noble Ṣaḥābah which is also necessarily appended to it. But, the weightier Tafsīr or explanation is the the one that is present in the Ḥadīth reported from the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself.

At the end of verse 69, it was said: *وَكَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَجِيهًا* (And he was honorable in the sight of Allah). The Arabic word used for Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام *wajih* denotes the honor and elegance of someone who deserves regard and consideration. When used with: *'indallāh*: in the sight of Allah), it would mean a person whose prayer is answered by Allah Ta'ālā and whose wish He does not turn down. Hence, the station of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام as a person whose prayers were answered (popularly known as: *mustajab-ud-da'awāt*) is proved from many events mentioned in the

Qur'ān where he prayed to Allah for something and He answered it the way he wanted it to be. Most unique of these is the prayer he made about Sayyidnā Hārūn (Aaron) عليه السلام where he wished that he be made a prophet. Allah Ta'ālā accepted his prayer and made him a co-prophet with Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام - although, the high office of prophethood is not given to someone on someone's recommendation. (Ibn Kathīr)

### Customarily, Allah Ta'ālā keeps prophets free from physical defects causing aversion

In this event, Allah Ta'ālā has demonstrated such unusual concern to have Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام absolved of the blame imputed to him by his people which took no less than a miracle whereby a rock ran away with Sayyidnā Mūsā's clothes and he, compelled by circumstances beyond his control, came out undressed before the people. This extra-ordinary care shown by Allah Ta'ālā to free his prophet from this blame points out to the fact that Allah Ta'ālā keeps even the bodies of His prophets generally free and pure from defects that appear repulsive and undignified - as it stands proved from the Ḥadīth of Bukhārī that all prophets are lineally high-born. The reason is that it would be hard to agree to listen to, accept and follow someone from the line and family regarded by people as customarily low. Similarly, the history of prophets does not bear out that any prophet was blind, deaf, dumb or handicapped. As for the case of Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام, it cannot be used to raise any objection, for what happened to him was the dictate of Divine wisdom, a particular trial, a temporary discomfort which was eliminated later on. Allah knows best.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ﴿٧٠﴾ يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ  
وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ

O those who believe, fear Allah, and speak what is straight forward. Allah will correct your deeds for your benefit, and forgive for you your sins. (33:70-71)

The original word used in the text for "what is straight forward" is 'sādīd' which has been explained by some exegetes as what is the truth. Others explain it as straight, while still others, as correct. Quoting all of these, Ibn Kathīr calls all these true (on the beam hitting the target). The Holy Qur'ān has chosen this word, instead of *ṣādiq* or *mustaqīm*, because the present word holds all these attributes of ideal speech within itself. It

was for this reason that Kāshifī said in Rūḥ-ul-Bayān: *Qawl Sadīd* is the saying of what is true having no trace of falsity; correct having no trace of error, right thing being no joke or fun; spoken softly, not harshly.

### **Correct use of one's power of speech is an effective source of correcting all deeds issuing forth from other parts of the body**

The basic command given to all Muslims in this verse is: *اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ* (Take to *taqwa*, that is, fear Allah and act accordingly). The reality of *taqwā* lies in one's total obedience to all Divine injunctions whereby one carries out everything enjoined and abstains from everything declared prohibited and repugnant. And it is obvious that doing so is no easy task for human beings. Therefore, immediately after the main guideline of *اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ* (*ittaqaullāh*: Fear Allah and act accordingly), there appears an instruction to start doing something particular, that is, the correction and reform of one's speech. Though, this too is nothing but a part of *taqwa* itself, yet it is one such part of it that, should this thing come under control, all other remaining components of the comprehensive requirement of *taqwā* would start becoming achievable automatically, as the verse itself has promised that, as a result of one's making his or her speech truthful and straight, Allah will correct his deeds. In other words it means that, 'should you succeed in holding your tongue and avoiding errors of speech and get used to saying what is correct, straight and right, Allah Ta'ālā will correct every other deed you do and make all of them better.' Then, concluding the verse, another promise was made and it was said: *يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ* (and He will forgive for you your sins). It means: 'One who gains control over his tongue, learns to harness his or her power of speech and becomes used to saying what is true and right, then, Allah Ta'ālā will take care of the rest of his or her deeds, have them corrected and made better as well as forgive any errors or slips made therein.'

### **Injunctions of the Qur'ān were made easy to follow**

Deliberation in the general style of the noble Qur'ān shows that at a place where acting upon a Qur'ānic injunction seems to be difficult, a method has also been suggested along with it to make it easy. And since *taqwā* is the essence of the entire religion of Islam and fulfilling its dictates on all counts is very hard indeed, therefore, speaking generally, wherever the command to observe *taqwā* (*'ittaqaullāh'*) has been given, there appears soon after, the suggestion to do something that facilitates

acting in accordance with the rest of the elements of Taqwā, something that comes from the side of Allah as His grace and *taufīq*. An apt and ready at hand example of it lies in this very verse where the suggestion of: *اقْتُوا* (say the right thing) follows soon after the command of: *اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ* (*ittaqullāh*: Fear Allah). And immediately earlier too, in verse 69, after saying: *ittaqullāh*:( Fear Allah), it was said: "Do not be like those who caused pain to Mūsā) whereby people were reminded that causing pain to righteous and favoured servants of Allah is the most serious impediment in the achievement of *taqwa* and, once this impediment was removed, the way to *taqwā* will become easy.

Similarly in another verse the command to observe Taqwā has been supplemented by the direction of having the company of 'truthful persons' (9.118) which means that the easiest way to acquire the quality of *taqwā* is to remain in the company of righteous people. At another place the command of *taqwā* is followed by the direction of pondering on what one has sent ahead for the Hereafter, because it leads one to observe Taqwā (59.18).

### Saying what is right leads to doing what is right both here and Hereinafter

Shāh ‘Abdul-Qādir of Delhi رحمه الله تعالى has translated this verse in a way that leads to the conclusion that the promise of correction and betterment of deeds made to those who get used to speaking in straight forward manner is not restricted to religious deeds alone. In fact, everything one does in this material world is also included therein. Anyone who gets used to saying the right thing - that is, never lies, speaks with deliberation without erring or wavering, does not deceive anyone and does not say what would hurt - shall find his spiritual deeds for his eternal life in the Hereafter, also come out right for him. As for the things he must do to live in this mortal world, these too will turn for the better. (The Urdu speaking readers should refer to the original translation of Shāh Abdul Qādir to have a taste of its sweetness-editor)

### Verses 72 - 73

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا

وَأَشْفَقْنَا مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا ﴿٧٢﴾  
 لِيُعَذِّبَ اللَّهُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ وَالْمُشْرِكَاتِ وَيَتُوبَ  
 اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ط وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٧٣﴾

We did offer the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear its burden and were afraid of it, and man picked it up. Surely, he was unjust (to himself), unaware (of the end), [72] with the result that Allah will punish the hypocrites, men and women, and the Mushriks, men and women, and will accept the repentance of the believing men and women. Surely Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [73]

### Commentary

Emphasis has been placed in this entire Sūrah on the reverence of the Messenger of Allah and on the obligation of obeying him. Now in the later part of the Sūrah, the great station and rank of this obedience has been identified. Here, the obedience to Allah and His Messenger and the implementation of their commands has been expressed through the word: *amanah*: (Trust), the reason of which will appear later.

### What does "amanah" mean?

What is meant by the word: *amānah* at this place? many views of the leading exegetes among Ṣaḥābah and Tabi'īn, and others, have been reported to answer this question. Different things have been held to be the '*amānah*', such as, Islamic Legal Obligations, Protection of Chastity, Properties held under Trust, Removal of Impurity through having bath, Ṣalāh, Zakāh Fasting, Ḥajj etc. Therefore, the majority of commentators have said that all areas of religious conduct are included in it. (Qurṭubī)

In Tafsīr Mazharī, it was said: The whole package of all obligations and prohibitions set by the Sharī'ah is *amanah*. In Al-Baḥr-ul-Mūḥīṭ, Abū Ḥayyān said:

الظَّاهِرُ أَنَّهَا كُلُّ مَا يُؤْتَمَنُ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَمْرٍ وَنَهْيٍ وَشَأْنٍ دِينِيٍّ وَدُنْيَا وَالشَّرْعُ كُلُّهُ أَمَانَةٌ  
 وَهَذَا قَوْلُ الْجَمْهُورِ

Apparently every thing one is trusted with (by the Sharī'ah) from obligations and prohibitions, and every state of life which relates to this world or the Hereafter - in fact, the Sharī'ah, all

of it, is *amanah*. And this is the position the majority of Muslim scholars has taken.

In short, *amānah* (trust) means to be obligated with the precepts and injunctions of the Sharī'ah and being under command to carry these out. Once this is accomplished to the best of one's ability, the eternal blessings of Jannah (Paradise) have been promised, and on any contravention or shortcoming, there shall be the punishment of Jahannam (Hell). Some early commentators have said that *amānah* (trust) refers to the capability of fulfilling the heavy responsibility placed by Divine injunctions, something that depends on a particular degree of reason and awareness - and moving forward therein and deserving Divine vice-regency depends on this very capability. The species of creation that do not have this capability, no matter how high or superior their placement, simply cannot advance from their given place. For this reason, the skies and the earth, even angels, have no inherent ability to go forward from the place they are in. Everything from these creatures is restricted to whatever station of nearness (to the Creator) it has. Their state is aptly pointed to in a verse of the Qur'an where it was said: *مَآئِمًا إِلَّا لَهُ، مَقَامٌ مَّعْلُومٌ* (There is no one among us who does not have a known station - As-Şāffāt, 37:164)

Under this sense of *amānah* (trust), all narrations of Ḥadīth about *amānah* turn out to be symmetrical and the sayings of the majority of commentators also converge on almost a mutual agreement.

In the Şaḥīḥs of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, and in the Musnad of Aḥmad, there is a narration from Sayyidnā Ḥudhaifah رضي الله عنه saying that, 'the Holy Prophet ﷺ had told us about two things. One of these we have already witnessed with our own eyes. The unfolding of the other is still awaited. The first thing was that, "First of all, *amānah* was sent down into the hearts of the men of faith. Then, the Qur'an was revealed and then the people of faith acquired knowledge from the Qur'an, and practice from the Sunnah".

After that, he narrated the other Ḥadīth as follows: "A time will come when no sooner does a man rise from sleep, *amanah* (trust) will be confiscated from out of his heart leaving some of its traces behind, just like you would roll down an ember from the fire on your feet (and this ember will certainly roll away but) its traces will survive in the form of

inflammation or blister - although, no constituent element of the fire itself is left out there. So much so that people will enter into mutual transactions and contracts, but no one will fulfill the obligations of amanah due against him and (there will be such a dearth of trustworthy men that) people will be found saying that there is a trustworthy man in such and such tribe!"

In this Ḥadīth *amānah* has been declared to be something which relates to the heart and this alone has the ability of fulfilling the obligations and duties imposed by the Sharī'ah of Islam.

And according to a narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr رضي الله عنه appearing in the Musnad of Aḥmad, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have said, "There are four things which, if you come to have them, and you have nothing out of so many worldly things, you are still no loser. (Those four things are): Guarding of trust, telling the truth, good morals and lawful sustenance. (From Ibn Kathīr)

### **An investigation into the way the 'trust' was 'offered'**

In the cited verse (72), it was said that Allah Ta'ālā placed this *amānah* (trust) before the heavens, the earth and the mountains and all of them refused to bear the burden of this responsibility shrinking from it out of the danger of not being able to fulfill its due right - but, man did.

Here, it is worth pondering that the heavens, the earth and the mountains that are inanimate and, obviously devoid of knowledge and consciousness, how then would it be possible to rationalize the presentation of such an offer before them and that of their response to it? Some early commentators have taken this to be a figure of speech - as the noble Qur'ān has said elsewhere by way of comparison: لَوَأَنزَلْنَا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَى جَبَلٍ لَّرَأَيْنَهُ خَاشِعًا مُّتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ (Had We sent down this Qur'ān to a mountain, you would have seen it humbled, burst apart out of awe for Allah - Al-Ḥashr 59:21). It is obvious that this example has been given as a matter of supposition - not that it was really revealed to or on a mountain. So, these commentators have taken the 'offer' of 'trust' to the heavens etc. also in a figurative or metaphorical sense.

But, in the sight of the majority of Muslim scholars, it is not correct, because in the verse of Sūrah Al-Ḥashr, the Qur'ān has itself made it clear, by initiating the statement with the word: 'if,' that it is just a

hypothetical statement. On the contrary, the present verse is an affirmation of an incident in a descriptive style, and it is not permissible to take it in figurative or metaphorical sense without any proof. And if it is argued that these things have no senses and therefore no question can be asked from them and no answer is expected from them, then this argument stands rejected on the basis of other express statements of the Qur'ān. The reason is that the Qur'ān has explicitly said: **وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ** (And there is not a single thing that does not extol His purity and praise - Al-Isra', 17:44). And it is obvious that knowing Allah Ta'ālā, realizing that He is the Creator, the Master, the highest and the best, and glorifying Him consequently is something not possible without knowledge and consciousness. Therefore, it stands proved from this verse that knowledge and consciousness do exist in all elements of creation to the extent that these are also there in what is considered to be inanimate. On the basis of this knowledge and consciousness, these can be addressed and a response can be expected from them. Their response could take different forms. It could take the form of words and letters and - it is not rationally impossible - that Allah Ta'ālā could bestow on the heavens and the earth and the mountains the functional ability to verbalize and speak. Therefore, in the sight of the majority of the learned among the Muslim Ummah, the phenomenon of this 'ard of *amānah* (the placement or offer of trust) came to pass in reality and these entities expressed their inability to bear the burden of this responsibility - also in reality. There is no simile or metaphor at work here.

### **The acceptance of the offer of the 'trust' was optional, not mandatory**

A question may be asked here. When Allah Ta'ālā personally made the offer of this great trust before the heavens and the earth and the mountains, how could they dare refuse it? If they had contravened the Divine order, they would have been destroyed totally. In addition to that, the obedience of the heavens and the earth to divine orders is also proved from the verse: **آتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ** (we come in obedience - Fuṣṣilat, 41:11) which means: When Allah Ta'ālā ordered the heavens and the earth to come to implement His command, be it willingly or unwilling, both of these responded by saying that they were pleased to come to obey His command.

The answer is that, in the cited verse (41:11), the command given had a

mandatory command with it where it was also said that they were to come with pleasure, or without it but, no matter what is the case, they had to obey the command. This is contrary to the present verse featuring the offer of the trust where following its presentation, they were given the choice of taking or not taking this awesome responsibility.

Ibn Kathīr has, with the support of various authorities, reported from several Ṣaḥābah and Tabi'īn - Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās, Ḥasan al-Baṣri, Mujāhid and others - the following details of this offer of the trust:

'What Allah Ta'ālā offered first to the heavens, then to the earth, and then to the mountains as a matter of choice was: Would you undertake to carry out the responsibility imposed by this trust (obedience to given injunctions) from Us against a return fixed for it?' Everyone asked, 'What is the return?' It was said, 'If you fulfill the demands of this trust (obedience to given injunctions) to the best of your ability, you will have the best of reward, and particularly the honor of having nearness to Allah, and if you failed to implement these injunctions, or fell short in it, you will be punished.' Hearing this, all these huge big bodies responded by saying, 'O our Lord, we are operating under Your command even now. But (now when we have been given a choice), we find ourselves weak and unable to bear the burden of this heavy responsibility. As reward, we do not want it, and as for punishment, we cannot bear it.' And Tafsīr Qurṭubī, with reference to Hakim Tirmidhi, has reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: '(After the offer of the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and after their response), Allah Ta'ālā addressed Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام and said: 'We offered Our trust to the heavens and the earth but they expressed their inability to bear the burden of this responsibility. Now, would you assume this responsibility knowing that which goes with it?' 'Ādam عليه السلام asked, 'O Lord, what is it that goes with it?' The answer was: 'If you succeeded in fulfilling the demands of this trust to your best (that is, remained obedient to your best), you will be rewarded (which will be in the form of the nearness and pleasure of Allah and the eternal bliss of Jannah (Paradise), and if you let this trust go to waste, you will be punished.' 'Ādam عليه السلام (eager to advance towards nearness and pleasure of Allah Ta'ālā) went ahead and assumed this responsibility. However, from the moment he assumed the burden of this heavy trust, not much time had passed, not even that much as is between the Ṣalāh of 'Aṣr and Zuhr,

within which the Satan snared him into that well-known slip and he was made to leave Jannah.

### **During which period of time did this event of the offer of trust take place?**

From the narration of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه which has appeared immediately above, it seems that this offer of trust made to the heavens and the earth and the mountains was made before the creation of 'Ādam. Then, following the creation of Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام, it was also said before him that this trust was also offered to the heavens and the earth earlier, and that they did not have the ability to bear the burden of this responsibility, therefore, they excused themselves out of it.

And what is apparent here is that this event of the offer of trust came before the Covenant of Eternity, that is, the Covenant of 'Alast because the Covenant of أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ (Am I not your Lord?) is a phase of this very acceptance to carry out the responsibility of fulfilling the trust - and stands for taking a solemn pledge to hold and discharge the responsibilities enjoined by an office.

### **For vicegerency on the earth, the ability to bear the responsibilities of the great trust was necessary**

As eternally predestined, Allah Ta'ālā had already decided to appoint Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام His Khalīfah (vicegerent) on the earth and this Khilafah (vicegerency) could only be entrusted with one who bears the responsibility of upholding the essential obedience to Divine injunctions - because, it is the very objective of this Khilafah that the Law of Allah be implemented on the earth and that the creation of Allah be induced to obey Divine injunctions. Therefore, as a matter of creational imperative, Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام agreed to bear the burden of the responsibility of this trust - although the inability of other humongous units of creation to bear it was already in his knowledge. (Maḥzarī and Bayān-ul-Qur'ān).

In the last sentence of verse 72: إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا : Surely, he was unjust (to himself) unaware (of the end), the word: 'Zalūm' means one who is unjust to himself, and 'jahūl' means one who is unaware of the end. From this sentence, it is generally assumed that it has appeared here blaming man in an absolute sense, that is, so ignorant was man that he went ahead inflicting injustice upon himself by accepting to carry such a big burden of responsibility, something beyond his power. But, in the light of

explicit statements in the Qur'ān, this is not actually so because 'man' may mean either Sayyidnā 'Ādam ﷺ or whole mankind. Now Sayyidnā 'Ādam ﷺ is, as a prophet, protected by Allah from committing sins. The burden of responsibility which he had assumed was carried out by him duly and certainly. As a result of this, he was made a vicegerent of Allah (Khalīfatullāh) and sent to the earth. He was made the object of prostration by angels and, in the Hereafter, his station is far higher than that of the angels. And if 'man' must mean mankind, then, in this class, there are several hundred thousands of noble prophets عليهم السلام and several millions of the righteous and the men of Allah (awliya' Allah) even angels emulate - those who proved by their conduct in life that they were capable of handling and deserving this Divine trust. It was because of the basis laid out by these very noble souls, who duly vacated the rights and demands inherent in the great trust, that the Holy Qur'ān declared mankind to be the noblest of Divine creation: وَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ (And We bestowed dignity on the Children of 'Ādam - Al-Isra', 17:70). This proves that neither is Sayyidnā 'Ādam ﷺ blameworthy, nor the mankind as a whole. Therefore, commentators have said that this sentence is not there to impute a blame, rather, it appears there as the description of the actual event with regard to the most of individuals in the class. As such, the sense is that the majority of human kind proved to be *zalūm* (one who inflicts injustice upon himself) and *jahūl* (one who is unaware of the end) that failed to fulfill the rights and demands of this trust and fell into the abyss of loss. And since this was the state of affairs with the majority, therefore, it was attributed to humankind.

In short, in the verse, the two words (*Zalūm* and *Jahūl*) mentioned above have been used for those particular individuals among human beings who did not obey the injunctions of the Sharī'ah as they were expected to, and failed to fulfill the right entailed by the *amānah* or trust placed with them - that is, the disbelievers, hypocrites, transgressors, the wicked, and sinning Muslims of the community. This Tafsīr has been reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, Sayyidnā Ibn Jubayr رضي الله عنه, Ḥasan Al-Baṣri رحمه الله تعالى and others. (Qurtūbī)

And there are others who have said that *Zalūm* and *Jahūl* has been used at this place in the sense of 'naïve', as an affectionate form of address carrying the thought that man, brimming with love for his Creator and in quest of the station of nearness to Him, simply forgot the

end of the whole thing. Similarly, these words could also be taken to have been spoken for the entire humankind. In Tafsīr Mazḥarī, details of this aspect have been reported from Mujaddid Alf Thāni and other noble Ṣufīs.

لُعَذِّبَ اللَّهُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ (with the result that Allah will punish the hypocrites, men and women, and the Mushriks, men and women, and will accept the repentance of the believing men and women. Surely Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [73]) The letter 'lam' used in the beginning of this verse is not for mentioning the cause or aim, as generally understood in common usage, but it is the lam of 'aqibah in the terminology of Arabic linguistics. It points out to the end of something, as it appears in a line of Arabic poetry which reads:

لِدُّوْا لِلْمَوْتِ وَابْنُوْا لِلْخَرَابِ

'Be born only to be dead and build only to be ruined'

It does not mean that the aim of one's birth was to be dead or that the aim of constructing of a building was that it could be ruined, but it simply means that the end of everyone born is death and the end of every building is falling into ruins.

The sense of the verse is that, as a result of man's assumption of responsibility for the trust, mankind will split in two groups: (1) Disbelievers, hypocrites and others who will rebel against Divine orders and become wasters of the great 'trust'. They will be punished. (2) There will be believing men and believing women who, through their obedience to Divine injunctions, will fulfill the dictates of the trust reposed in them. They will be treated with mercy and forgiveness.

The Tafsīr of the two words: Ḍalūm and Jahūl that has been reported above from most Tafsīr authorities finds additional support in this last sentence as well - that these words are not meant for the whole mankind. In fact, they particularly refer to those individuals who wasted away the Divine trust reposed in them. And Allah, Pure and High, knows best.

**The Commentary on  
Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb ends here  
With the help of and praise for Allah Ta'ālā**